

THE USE OF פָּנָא IN ISA 45:22:  
A PARONOMASTIC TAUNT

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Abstract

This thesis examines the use of אָפָּס in Isa 45:22. Isaiah uses polysemy to depict YHWH's call to salvation that is directed to both the "ends of the earth" and the idol-like "nothings of the earth."

Throughout the entire book, and particularly chs. 40-55 of Isaiah, the prophet repeats the term אָפָּס to describe idols and idolaters as "nothing" in comparison to the altogether incomparable YHWH. In Isa 45:22, however, אָפָּס appears in the idiomatic phrase אָפָּסִי אֶרֶץ (ends of the earth). All translations and commentators understand the expression as a geographic reference without allowing Isaiah's other uses of the term to influence this occurrence. This thesis argues that not only does Isaiah intend to call to salvation the "ends of the earth" but also the idol-like "nothings of the earth."

After reviewing some preliminary considerations, this work begins by examining the lexeme אָפָּס and its cognates in extra-biblical and canonical contexts. Next, it considers the form and structure of Isaiah, especially that of 40-55. Then, it analyzes the literary-theological context of Isaiah. Finally, this thesis offers a fresh reading of Isa 45:22 in light of the previous analysis and concludes that אָפָּסִי אֶרֶץ signifies both the "ends of the earth" and "nothings of the earth."

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David Sobey  
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## ABBREVIATIONS

AB	Anchor Bible
<i>BibSac</i>	<i>Biblia Sacra</i>
<i>BHRG</i>	Van der Merwe, Christo, Jackie Naudé, and Jan Kroeze. <i>A Biblical Hebrew Reference Grammar</i> . London: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999
BL	Bible and Literature
<i>BZAW</i>	Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft
<i>CAD</i>	<i>The Assyrian Dictionary of the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago</i> . Chicago, 1956–
<i>CBQ</i>	<i>Catholic Biblical Quarterly</i>
<i>CBQMS</i>	Catholic Biblical Quarterly Monograph Series
<i>DCH</i>	<i>Dictionary of Classical Hebrew</i> . Edited by D. J. A. Clines. 6 vols. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1993–
<i>DNWSI</i>	Hoftijzer, J. and K. Jongeling. <i>Dictionary of the North-West Semitic Inscriptions</i> . 2 vols. Handbuch der Orientalistik. Leiden: Brill, 1995
ESV	English Standard Version
<i>GKC</i>	<i>Gesenius' Hebrew Grammar</i> . Edited by E. Kautzsch. Translated by A. E. Cowley. 2d. ed. Oxford, 1910
<i>HALOT</i>	Koehler, Ludwig and Walter Baumgartner. <i>The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament</i> . 2 vols. Leiden: Brill, 1994-2000
HB	Hebrew Bible
<i>HCOT</i>	Historical Commentary on the Old Testament
<i>IBHS</i>	Waltke, Bruce K. and M. O'Connor. <i>An Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax</i> . Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns: 1990
<i>Int</i>	<i>Interpretation</i>
<i>JDDS</i>	Jian Dao Dissertation Series
J-M	Joüon, Paul and Takamitsu Muraoka. <i>A Grammar of Biblical Hebrew</i> . 2 Vols. Rome: Editrice Pontificio Istituto Biblico, 2003
<i>JSOT</i>	<i>Journal for the Study of the Old Testament</i>
<i>JSOTSup</i>	Journal for the Study of the Old Testament: Supplement Series
<i>JSS</i>	<i>Journal of Semitic Studies</i>
LAI	Library of Ancient Israel
LXX	Septuagint
MT	Masoretic Text
NAC	New American Commentary
NCB	New Century Bible
NICOT	New International Commentary on the Old Testament
NJPS	Tanakh: The Holy Scriptures: The New JPS Translation according to the Traditional Hebrew Text
NLT	New Living Translation
NRSV	New Revised Standard Version
NSBT	New Studies in Biblical Theology
OBO	Orbis Biblicus et Orientalis
OTL	Old Testament Library
OTS	Old Testament Studies

OtSt	Oudtestamentische Studiën
PO	Pretoria Oriental Series
RVA	Reina Valera Antigua
SOTBT	Studies in Old Testament Biblical Theology
SP	Samaritan Pentateuch
Syr.	Syriac
<i>TDOT</i>	<i>Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament</i> . Edited by G. J. Botterweck and H. Ringgren. Translated by J. T. Willis, G. W. Bromiley, and D. E. Green. 8 vols. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1974–
TO	Targum Onqelos
TJ	Targum Jonathan
<i>TrinJ</i>	<i>Trinity Journal</i>
Vg.	Vulgate
<i>VT</i>	<i>Vetus Testamentum</i>
VTSup	Supplements to <i>Vetus Testamentum</i>
WBC	Word Biblical Commentary
<i>WHS</i>	Williams, Ronald J. <i>Williams' Hebrew Syntax</i> . 3d ed. Rev. and Exp. by John C. Beckman. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2007
<i>ZAH</i>	<i>Zeitschrift für Althebraistik</i>

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The Davidic monarchs and their subjects, living at the crossroads of empires in eighth-century BC Judah, vacillate between political allegiances and find their attendant survival uncertain. The rulers' alliances waver between the small but local Syro-Ephraimite coalition, the dominant Assyrian empire, and the up-and-coming Babylonians. Beyond mere politics, the Judahites and their neighbors understand the outcome of warfare to have cosmic provenience and implications. Desperate for assistance, Israel turns to other peoples and gods for deliverance. Into this uncertainty, the prophet Isaiah ben Amoz calls the kings and people of Judah to return to YHWH, obey his covenant, and trust in the genuine Sovereign for salvation from impending invasions. Through weal and woe, the prophet describes the incomparability of YHWH, who is the only source of hope and help.

Isaiah provokes his hearers to consider where they will seek their sustenance. In Isa 40-55, YHWH contends with and proves the ineptitude of false gods and their worshippers through a series of trial speeches. The verdict shows that Israel, as well as those who join the covenant community, secures deliverance through repentance and trust in YHWH, who is the exclusive source of strength. Through various contrasts and proclamations, Isaiah demonstrates that the idols are worthless—that they themselves need help and are without hope.

Altogether monotheistic, Isaiah declares that there is no god but YHWH. Compared to YHWH, all else is considered “nothing” (דְּבָרָא). The prophet describes how idols (41:22) and their worshippers—predominately foreign nations (40:17; cf. 41:12)—are of no benefit. For this reason, he repeats the refrain: “there is no other god but

YHWH, none” (סִפְאָרָה, 47:8; cf. 45:6, 14). The word סִפְאָרָה, found in Isaiah more than any other corpus, describes the idols and their worshippers as *nothing*. Particularly within his polemic against other gods, Isaiah contrasts the incomparable YHWH with the nothing-like idols and their followers, who resemble the objects of their worship and who will subsequently become inconsequential themselves.

One of the greatest biblical poets, Isaiah uses wordplay throughout his oracles. Not unlike other prophets, Isaiah names or refers to individuals or groups with specific terms or phrases for weal or woe. In this manner, the prophet creates a pun with the word אפס in Isa 45:22. By understanding Isaiah's use of אפס within the context of YHWH's dispute with the idols/idolaters, one discerns another instance of Isaianic paronomasia—YHWH calls to the nothings/ends (“nothings”/ends) of the earth to turn and be saved.

After reviewing previous scholarly interpretations of Isaiah 45:22 and its greater context, this thesis will investigate the term אֱלֹהִים within the Hebrew Bible and other pertinent corpora. Next, this work will consider the form and structure of Isaiah, paying particular attention to YHWH’s trial speeches with the false gods and their worshippers. The verdict will resound: YHWH alone is Lord, any other god or power is as *nothing*. Subsequently, we will consider the literary-theological context and discern Isaiah’s numerous ways of describing the uniqueness of Israel’s God and the comparative nothingness of every other nation or god. With this background, the pertinent passage will be investigated in chapter five, followed by a conclusion demonstrating that the term אֱלֹהִים in Isa 45:22 has a dual reference to “nothings” or “ends” of the earth, whom YHWH summons to salvation.

## 2. PROLEGOMENA

This chapter will lay the foundation for the following analysis of Isa 45:22. We will first examine the issues of authorship, literary unity, and historical-cultural context and then review scholarly interpretations of Isa 45:22.

### 2.1 Authorship and Unity

Critical scholars generally deny Isaianic authorship of the entire canonical book and divide the book into three distinct units. The tripartite division of the book is a foregone conclusion for many; as Petersen claims, “[V]irtually no one maintains that the entire book (or even most of it) was written by one person.”<sup>1</sup> Two major factors lead many to discern disunity within the book: first, the respective sections of the book seem to presuppose a change of *Sitz im Leben*; that is, the book appears to address different stages in the history of Israel. The evidence proffered for this change is the conspicuously different tone and style many find in different portions of the book. It is claimed, secondly, that one goes “beyond enlightened logic” to assume that a single author could foretell events—especially the name of Cyrus as much as 150 years in advance (44:28, 45:1).<sup>2</sup> Several discern three discrete sections: 1-39, 40-55, and 56-66. These respective chapters address eighth-century Judah, mid-sixth-century exiles, and sixth- to fifth-century returnees. Nonetheless, there are several legitimate reasons for understanding the book as a unified composition from Isaiah in the eighth-century.

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<sup>1</sup> David L. Petersen, *The Prophetic Literature: An Introduction* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2002), 48. Petersen acknowledge the difficulty of the first chapter with certain portions that “appear related to later portions of the book” (*ibid.*, 49).

<sup>2</sup> Christopher R. Seitz, “Isaiah, Book of (First Isaiah)” *ABD* 3:472-473. Scholars also offer several other arguments against a single author (e.g., there is a lack of explicit attribution to Isaiah after ch. 40); however, an extensive investigation into authorship is beyond the nature of the present work.

In spite of the scholarly “consensus,” reading Isaiah as a unified work from Isaiah ben Amoz leads to a better interpretation of the data as well as the book. The presupposition for many who deny Isaianic unity is an anti-supernatural bias that predetermines that Isaiah could not have predicted future events, let alone the name of an individual.<sup>3</sup> Thus, if one allows for special revelation, predictive prophecy does not rule out a unified composition.<sup>4</sup> Moreover, the naming of Cyrus is fundamental to Isaiah’s argument. If the author(s) presents false witness in court (see below), he undermines his case entirely and shows that he fabricates YHWH just as the idolaters form their images.

Additionally, closer scrutiny disproves much of the alleged discontinuity of style and historical context. Even in a cursory reading, one finds discontinuity between Isa 1-39 and 40-66; however, to bifurcate (or trifurcate) the book on this basis ignores the continuity apparent in a single hand. Many admit that there are key terms, themes, and even a coherent theology that run throughout the whole book (e.g., Zion/Jerusalem and YHWH as the Holy One and King).<sup>5</sup> Petersen, for example, finds in Isa 1 “one of the most telling challenges to the scholarly consensus” since some ideas in ch. 1 “appear related to later portions of the book” and resemble “language that appears in chapters 40-55... or even 56-66.”<sup>6</sup> Many also acknowledge the dependence of the later sections of the

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<sup>3</sup> Kitchen claims that there were several previous rulers in (what became) Persia who were named Cyrus before Cyrus the Great. Thus, the naming of one from the east named Cyrus is not completely outlandish (*On the Reliability of the Old Testament* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003], 380). Regardless, YHWH foretold Cyrus’ name to demonstrate his supernatural power. The naming of Cyrus should confound skeptics (see below).

<sup>4</sup> This is not the only biblical text where an individual is named before the fact (cf. 1 Kgs 13:2).

<sup>5</sup> Klaus Baltzer. *Deutero-Isaiah* (Hermenia; Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2001), 1.

<sup>6</sup> *The Prophetic Literature*, 49.

prophecy upon “First Isaiah.”<sup>7</sup> Thus, the tripartite division has recently been acknowledged to be too simplistic. For this reason some propose a complex history of various sources, which a final redactor combined and sewed together almost seamlessly.<sup>8</sup> However, one finds it difficult not to look with suspicion upon an argument that first assumes the conclusion and then seeks to explain the *absence* of evidence.

Several scholars have also simply presupposed or exaggerated the apparent disjointed historical context. Outside the handful of references to Babylon, Motyer argues, “there is little that is exclusively or typically Babylonian about the chapters [40-55] save that Cyrus is named as Babylon’s conqueror (44:25, 45:1).”<sup>9</sup> To divide the book on the basis of supposed historical differences results in un-provable and subjective distinctions. On the basis of these unnatural divisions, for instance, Petersen claims the exodus was “unimportant” to Isaiah ben Amoz and ignores obvious allusions (Isa 12:2; cf. 40).<sup>10</sup> More often than not, the disunity of Isaiah is claimed as an axiomatic truth; the evidence, however, is not as conclusive.

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<sup>7</sup> As Childs says, “both its older and newer elements have been structured into a clear theological pattern which is integrally connected with Second Isaiah...a major aim of the theological redaction of First Isaiah was to assure that its message was interpreted in the light of Second Isaiah” (*Introduction to the Old Testament as Scripture* [Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1979], 331, 333). Elsewhere he says, “Certainly the force of much of the imagery of both Second and Third Isaiah is missed unless the connection with First Isaiah is recognized” (*ibid.*, 329-30).

<sup>8</sup> E.g., Petersen, *The Prophetic Literature*, 48; cf. Sigmund Mowinckel, *He That Cometh: The Messiah Concept in the Old Testament and Later Judaism* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005), 15-20.

<sup>9</sup> *The Prophecy of Isaiah: An Introduction and Commentary* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1993), 28.

<sup>10</sup> *The Prophetic Literature*, 37. Isaiah 12:2 contains a verbatim line from the Song of the Sea (Exod 15:2). Moreover, ch. 12 comes on the heels of an *exodus-like deliverance* (מִצְרַיִם, 11:16b).

## 2.2 Historical Milieu

Isaiah's scathing critiques of idols and idolatry appear superfluous in the post-exilic period when idolatry was not as abundant; on the other hand, Isaiah's polemics better address the eighth-century Judah milieu. Many presume Cyrus' reign to be the *terminus ad quo* for "Deutero-Isaiah" and that the book was predominantly composed in Babylon.<sup>11</sup> Some claim that "an exiled Jew" would be disenchanted by the exile and conclude that YHWH "was not better than the other gods."<sup>12</sup> However, one finds a significantly different emphasis within the religious community when reading the supposed contemporary religious leaders of the newly restored community. These presumed post-exilic contemporaries do not overtly address the problem of idolatry (cf. Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi).<sup>13</sup> Archaeologists have discovered relatively few pagan shrines or statues dating to the Persian period to warrant Isaiah's lengthy and repeated polemics compared to the thousands of idols and idolatrous paraphernalia, dating between the tenth- and sixth-century in Palestine.<sup>14</sup> Thus, the Palestinian setting fits just as well (if not better) in eighth-century Judah, a time when the author may accurately decry rampant "religious aberration."<sup>15</sup> Therefore, the supposed date of "Deutero-Isaiah"

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<sup>11</sup> Baltzer, *Deutero-Isaiah*, 23.

<sup>12</sup> Schoors, *I Am God Your Saviour: A Form-Critical Study of the Main Genres of Is. XL-LV* (VTSup 24; Leiden: Brill, 1973), 244.

<sup>13</sup> Additionally, the restoration of the temple, while crucial in these post-exilic books, is hardly (if ever) mentioned in "Third-Isaiah" (Shultz "Isaiah, Isaiahs, and Current Scholarship," 254).

<sup>14</sup> Leith, Mary Joan Wynn, "Israel Among the Nations: The Persian Period" in *The Oxford History of the Biblical World* (Ed. M.D. Coogan; New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 276-316. Philip J. King and Lawrence E. Stager, *Life in Biblical Israel* (LAI; Ed. Douglas A. Knight; Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2001), 348. Cf. Ephraim Stern, "Between Persia and Greece: Trade, Administration and Warfare in the Persian and Hellenistic Periods (539-63 BCE)" in *The Archaeology of Society in the Holy Land* (ed. Thomas E. Levy; New York: Continuum, 1995), 432-446.

<sup>15</sup> Motyer, *The Prophecy of Isaiah*, 26. Shultz also finds some of the characterizations to be "overly selective and one-sided" ("Isaiah, Isaiahs, and Current Scholarship," in *Do Historical Matters Matter to*

is not as certain as it is claimed. As far as the location is concerned, Kitchen claims, “Second Isaiah betray[s] no first-hand knowledge of the metropolis in Babylon”<sup>16</sup> and though he dates the book very late, Baltzer also sees Jerusalem as the place where “Deutero-Isaiah” was composed. He lists several reasons, including the author’s familiarity “with Jerusalem’s geographic position,” which the prophet “incorporates into his text.”<sup>17</sup> Therefore, eighth-century Judah provides the best *Sitz im Leben* for Isaiah’s disputes with the idols. Rather than arguing a moot point, Isaiah addresses his contemporaries’ temptation to look to idols and other nations for assistance.

### 2.3 Historical-Cultural Context

Some scholars have critiqued Isaiah’s polemic against the idols as a misrepresentation of genuine image worship because many idolaters understood that the deity constitutes more than the physical image; the idol was the god’s abode or earthly representation.<sup>18</sup> For example, in Egypt the gods consist of spiritual bodies and inhabit the images with their “souls,” because those same images resemble “the gods in form, visage, and color.”<sup>19</sup>

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*Faith?: A Critical Appraisal of Modern and Postmodern Approaches to Scripture* [eds. James K. Hoffmeier and Dennis R. Magary; Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012], 254).

<sup>16</sup> *On the Reliability*, 379. Childs admits the absence of a historical setting is “in striking contrast” to other prophetic books (*Introduction to the Old Testament*, 325). By being loosed of its chronological mooring, as he sees it, Isaiah testifies “to a theology which was directed to subsequent generations of Israelites. Sinful Israel would always be the object of divine terror; repentant Israel would receive his promises of forgiveness” (*ibid.*, 327). Yet, Isaiah communicates this theology by showing that YHWH invokes terror *in history*.

<sup>17</sup> Baltzer, *Deutero-Isaiah*, 24. For his part, Baltzer dates “Deutero-Isaiah” to 450-400 BC (*ibid.*, 30).

<sup>18</sup> Edward M. Curtis, “Idol, Idolatry” *ABD* 3:377; Michael B. Dick, “Prophetic Parodies of Making the Cult Image” in *Born in Heaven Made on Earth: The Making of the Cult Image in the Ancient Near East* (Ed. Michael B. Dick; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1999), 1-54; Jeffrey J. Niehaus, *Ancient Near Eastern Themes in Biblical Theology* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2008), 101. This thesis predominately focuses on Isaiah’s literary description of idols within his prophecy—not the historical-cultural setting. The brief comments that follow obviously overgeneralize this broad, significant topic

<sup>19</sup> Niehaus, *Ancient Near Eastern Themes*, 100.

Furthermore, critics argue that Isaiah does not describe the idols or their function according to this standard ancient Near Eastern conception, but instead the prophet claims that these images *are* the gods themselves, according to these skeptics.

Any idolater could potentially scoff at Isaiah's caricatures of the foolishness of idol manufacturing, yet no idol worshipper would turn a blind eye to the prophet's taunt that the images accomplish nothing (Isa 41:23). Isaiah does not intend to give an exhaustive discourse on the nature of idolatry. Instead, the prophet focuses on the most significant issue—other gods do not *do* anything. The gods' impotence is the basis for Isaiah's mockery of the construction of idols. For this reason, Isaiah commands *the gods represented by the idols* to do anything, good or bad, yet they remain completely motionless and silent. Therefore, Isaiah concludes that these idols are nothing because they do nothing—well deserving of scorn. The gods behind the images are no more powerful than the block of wood that represents them. Indeed, Isaiah will call *their* (i.e., the gods') statues (נָסָכִים) an empty wind, because *they* accomplish nothing (אֵפֶס מַעֲשֵׂיהֶם, 41:29). Isaiah's polemic would still have rhetorical effect on his hearers, regardless of the theological understanding of idol-worshippers. To require of Isaiah a comprehensive philosophical analysis of idolaters misses the point—no other god *does anything* but YHWH.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> Oswalt notes that idolatry is the “point that the fundamental difference between the biblical and the nonbiblical religions is clearest” because YHWH is transcendent, unlike the other gods who “are coterminous with this world” (*Isaiah 40-66*, 175-76).

### 2.3.1 Comparative Literary Form

Israel was not the only nation who claimed their God or king was unique. Consider New Kingdom Ramesses II's inscription about his own supremacy in the Kadesh battle:

*No officer was with me, no charioteer, No soldier of the army, no shield-bearer; My infantry, my chariots yielded before them, Not one of them stood firm to fight with them... Too great is he, the great lord of Egypt... To allow aliens to step on his path! What are these Asiatics to you, O Amun, The wretches ignorant of god? I am alone, there's none with me! ...Hail, O good warrior, firm of heart, You have saved your soldiers, your chariots; You are Amun's son who acts with his arms, You have felled Khatti by your valiant strength. You are the perfect fighter, there's none like you...<sup>21</sup>*

In this passage, the Egyptian monarch's exaltation of himself as entirely unique is not unlike the language Isaiah uses of YHWH. In his monograph on the incomparability of God, Labuschagne catalogs several similar ancient Near Eastern parallels that describe the uniqueness or exclusivity of certain gods and/or kings.<sup>22</sup> Similar to some Israelites, one finds names and titles that extol the incomparability of individuals (e.g., Mannu-kī-šarri, 'who is like the king?').<sup>23</sup> However, the affirmation of the uniqueness of other gods or rulers is generally hollow. Since most other nations practice henotheism or monolatry, they overtly acknowledge the existence and rivalry between other gods. This thinking produces seemingly contradictory phrases such as, "he has no equal among the gods, his brothers," or, "Thou shinest, thou alone! None among the gods equals thee."<sup>24</sup> In these contexts, an appellation that denotes exclusivity "is not bestowed on one god at the expense of the other, for it is nothing more than an epithet expressing abounding praise to

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<sup>21</sup> Miriam Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature: Volume II: The New Kingdom* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976), 65-66, emphasis added.

<sup>22</sup> See, e.g., pp. 31-62 in *The Incomparability of Yahweh in the Old Testament* (PO 5; Leiden: Brill, 1966).

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., 48.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid., 43, 36.

both gods.”<sup>25</sup> However, Israel’s worship is unique, for the rest of biblical testimony and Isaiah in particular show that YHWH is not only special but the *only* Deity, as we will see below.

## 2.4 Review of Literature

Before investigating Isa 45:22 afresh, we will consider scholarly interpretations of this same passage. All scholarship consulted agrees that the phrase under analysis, **אפסי ארץ**, in Isa 45:22, refers to a geographic reference in some manner. Most translate the phrase “ends of the earth”<sup>26</sup> and understand it as a group of individuals *located at* the “ends of the earth” or as a synecdoche for *all people of* the earth.<sup>27</sup> Commentators understand the identity of the people entailed in the “ends of the earth” as either the Israelites, who are spread abroad by the exile, or non-Israelites. Those authors who conceive of the “ends of the earth” as the nations understand the passage as either YHWH’s offer of salvation to these foreigners or universal recognition by those same nations of the vindication of Israel. Most equate the referents of the פְּלִיטִי הַגּוּם (the escaped of nations) in 45:20 as the same **אפסי ארץ** in Isa 45:22.

Most interpret Isaiah 45:22 as a call to all humankind to turn to YHWH. Delitzsch understands the escapees (פְּלִיטִים) as “a remnant of the whole mass of the heathen” that are offered salvation.<sup>28</sup> Similarly, Motyer,<sup>29</sup> Lee,<sup>30</sup> Smith,<sup>31</sup> and Oswalt understand the

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<sup>25</sup> Ibid., 41.

<sup>26</sup> Watts alone translates **אפס** as “borderlands” in Isa 45:22 (*Isaiah 34-66* [WBC 25; rev. ed.; Columbia: Nelson Reference and Electronic, 2005], 704). Unless otherwise noted, all translations are the author’s.

<sup>27</sup> One could argue that this is a merism, i.e., one end of the earth to the other.

<sup>28</sup> *Isaiah* (vol. 7 of Commentary on the Old Testament in Ten Volumes; eds. C.F. Keil and F. Delitzsch; trans. James Martin; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1969), 228.

<sup>29</sup> Motyer, *The Prophecy of Isaiah*, 364-66.

<sup>30</sup> *Creation and Redemption in Isaiah 40-55* (JDDS 2; BL 2; ed. Philip P. Chia and Yeo Khiok-khng; Hong Kong: Alliance Bible Seminary, 1995), 91.

phrase to refer to “the idolatrous world.”<sup>32</sup> Others connect the פְּלִיטִי הָנוּם with the description of Cyrus’ conquest, which was described earlier in the chapter (45:1). Brueggemann<sup>33</sup> and Westerman see the refugees (פְּלִיטִים) as those “who have escaped from a lost battle, from the downfall of a state” wrought by Cyrus.<sup>34</sup> Koole also reads the phrase פְּלִיטִי הָנוּם as referring to “non-Israelites who were able to save their lives from destruction in Babylon and under the nations subject to Babylon.”<sup>35</sup> He claims the phrase קָצָה הָאָרֶץ is synonymous with אַפְּסִי אָרֶץ; i.e., the escapees who “are located in all corners of the earth.”<sup>36</sup> Nevertheless, those scholars who conceive of the אַפְּסִי אָרֶץ as those who escape the Persian monarch’s sword still understand the call of 45:22 to be universal, since Isaiah also describes Cyrus’ conquest in universal terms.<sup>37</sup> Thus, all humankind is invited to enjoy YHWH’s salvation.<sup>38</sup> Therefore, some argue, Isa 45:22 is “the widest possible invitation to salvation”<sup>39</sup> and “the greatest and most openly evangelical invitation which the Old Testament anywhere contains.”<sup>40</sup>

However, others do not take Isa 45:22 as a description of a universal offer of salvation but as the legal vindication of Israel. Whybray claims that understanding the

<sup>31</sup> Smith, *Isaiah 40-66* (NAC 15B; Nashville: B & H Publishing, 2009), 277. He references 44:17.

<sup>32</sup> Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah 40-66* (NICOT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 223.

<sup>33</sup> Brueggemann, *Isaiah 40-66* (Westminster Bible Companion; Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1998), 84.

<sup>34</sup> *Isaiah 40-66: A Commentary* (OTL; Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1969), 174-5.

<sup>35</sup> *Isaiah III* (3 vols.; HCOT; ed. Cornelis Houtman et al.; Kampen, Netherlands: Kok Pharos Publishing House, 1997), 2:482.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid., 2:486.

<sup>37</sup> Brueggemann, *Isaiah 40-66*, 84; Koole, *Isaiah III*, 2:485.

<sup>38</sup> Delitzsch, *Isaiah*, 230. Westermann, *Isaiah 40-66: A Commentary*, 174-5; McKenzie, *Second Isaiah: A New Translation with Introduction and Conclusion* (AB 20; Garden City: Doubleday, 1969), 84; Baltzer, *Deutero-Isaiah*, 249-50.

<sup>39</sup> Childs, *Isaiah* (OTL; Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2001), 355.

<sup>40</sup> Clements, “Isaiah 45:20-25” *Int* 40 (1986): 393.

passage as a universal offer of salvation “cannot be sustained” for it merely comes from an “ancient Christian tradition.”<sup>41</sup> As he sees it, the call is cosmic, yet the passage refers to the world’s acknowledgement of Israel’s “triumphant vindication” by YHWH.<sup>42</sup> Whybray, with the agreement of Merendino,<sup>43</sup> claims that the passage speaks of Israel’s legal acquittal, not “the soteriological connotations of Christian theology.”<sup>44</sup>

Schoors concurs that the “ends of the earth” alludes to Israel, yet understands “salvation” to be deliverance or victory. He admits that the universal language is “the most obvious meaning of the text”; however, since he finds Isa 45:22 to be the only “Deutero-Isaianic” text to make such a universal offer of salvation, he concludes that the “ends of the earth” are the “totality of Israel with an allusion to the diaspora.”<sup>45</sup>

Watts relies heavily on a post-exilic historical context and also finds a reference to Cyrus’ campaigns. The escapees are the residents of Babylon, “particularly those representing the lands of Syria-Palestine.”<sup>46</sup> These must “pay loyal tribute and thus be saved from [Cyrus’] military action.”<sup>47</sup> Watts alone understands *Cyrus* as the one who calls to the “borderlands” of the earth. The Persian king does not offer “salvation” but the “restoration of a measure of political order and prosperity, protection from vandals and bandits, and a share in the imperial peace in exchange for fealty and tribute.”<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> Whybray, *Isaiah 40-66* (NCB; Ed. Ronald E. Clements; Greenwood, SC: The Attic Press, Inc., 1975), 111.

<sup>42</sup> Whybray, *Isaiah 40-66*, 112.

<sup>43</sup> *Der Erste und der Letzte: Eine Untersuchung von Jes 40-48*. VTSup 31; Leiden: Brill, 1981), 448

<sup>44</sup> Whybray, *Isaiah 40-66*, 112.

<sup>45</sup> *I am God Your Saviour*, 236. Remarkably, he is doggedly against such an interpretation. The reference to “every knee” and “tongue” also refers to Israel; yet “even if these be taken literally, they still do not involve universal salvation, but only universal recognition of Yahwe’s power” (*ibid.*).

<sup>46</sup> Watts, *Isaiah 34-66*, 707.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, 705.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, 707.

One thing stands out among interpretations of סִפְאָן in Isa 45:22—no commentator reads this passage in light of Isaiah’s use of סִפְאָן within the book. The analysis below will demonstrate, as others have said, that Isaiah uses סִפְאָן as a synecdoche for all humanity *as well as* an appellation for the idol-like “nothings” of the earth. With the understanding that the author of Isaiah prophesied to eighth-century Judah about the contemporary issue of idolatry, we begin our analysis of Isa 45:22 with a lexical study of סִפְאָן.

### 3. LEXICAL ANALYSIS OF אָפָּס

This chapter will investigate the semantic range of אָפָּס by examining its cognates and etymology, as well as the use of the root in the Hebrew Bible, particularly Isaiah. At the conclusion of this chapter, we will find that the term אָפָּס in Isa 45:22 may indeed be an example of paronomasia. Isaiah's predilection for the root is apparent by his abundant use of אָפָּס, along with its several connotations; the most pertinent nuance is the more common "nothing," as well as the standardized phrase "the ends of the earth" (אָפָּסִי אֶרֶץ).

#### 3.1 Semitic Cognates

Since אָפָּס is relatively uncommon in Hebrew, an analysis of the Semitic cognates will yield a greater sampling of its usage and show that the root typically denotes the idea of *extinction* or *end*.<sup>49</sup> Though with infrequent attestation, one finds both Ugaritic and Phoenician inscriptions with the root. The former contains but one laconic, extant occurrence of the Ugaritic 'aps with the idea of "end."<sup>50</sup> Within Phoenician, on the other hand, one finds 'ps several times, often as a contrastive adverb or conjunction "however" or "but."<sup>51</sup> Additionally, the root is used adjectivally in one inscription to describe a person: 'dm šm 'ps. This expression may be translated as "a notable" or, significantly, "a nobody."<sup>52</sup> This last example will prove useful in our analysis of Isa 45:22, since Isaiah will also attribute this term to an individual.

Of all the cognates of אָפָּס, the Akkadian *apsû* occurs most frequently and may have a "genetic" relationship to the Hebrew phrase אָפָּסִי אֶרֶץ; additionally, the Akkadian

<sup>49</sup> אָפָּס occurs 43 times as a noun and five times as a verb.

<sup>50</sup> "His feet did not reach the footstool (*hdm*)/ his head did not reach his end (*apsh*)" (KTU 1.6 I 59-61).

<sup>51</sup> Charles R Krahmalkov, *Phoenician-Punic Dictionary* (Leuven, Belgium: Peeters Publishing, 2000), 69.

<sup>52</sup> J. Hoftijzer and K. Jongeling, eds., "אָפָּס," *DNWSI* 1:97.

*pasāsu* may share a common ancestor with אַפָּא, since it similarly denotes extinction.

Many understand *apsû* as a quintessential loanword from non-Semitic Sumerian AB.ZU, which means the “‘sentient’ sea.”<sup>53</sup> Akkadian subsequently borrowed this term and used it to denote the sea abode (*apsû*) of the Sumero-Akkadian god Ea. At times one finds *apsû* as a metonym for Ea, father of the patron deity Marduk of Babylon.<sup>54</sup> In a more general sense, *apsû* describes deep, subterranean water or the abyss below, which is contrasted with the height of mountains.<sup>55</sup> Thus, the Akkadian *apsû* refers to the aquatic (literal or metaphorical) abode or source of certain supernatural beings and/or the hidden netherworld. For our purposes, we note that the Akkadian *apsû* never carries the idea of non-existence or extinction like many of the occurrences of the Hebrew אַפָּא. Instead, this Akkadian cognate refers to the great and distant abyss, not unlike the Hebrew phrase אַפְּסִי־אַרְאָא, as we will see below. However, another Akkadian root (*pasāsu*) carries similar connotations with many of the “non-existence” nuances of אַפָּא and may even be a cognate (see below). This root means “to break, cancel, annul, smash, obliterate,” or “become dilapidated.”<sup>56</sup> One also finds the nominal *pasūsātu* attributed to a person named “Destruction.”<sup>57</sup> Unlike the root *apsû*, *pasāsu* contains the verbal idea of

<sup>53</sup> From AB[A] (sea) and ZU (to know) (John Alan Halloran, *Sumerian Lexicon: A Dictionary Guide to the Ancient Sumerian Language* [Los Angeles: Logogram Publishing, 2006], 14). Coincidentally, this term is similar to the Greek αβυσσος (read the bilabial voiced aspirant as a bilabial voiceless aspirant), from which we have the English “abyss.” However, most understand the provenience of αβυσσος to be from the root βαθυς “deep” (Hjalmar Frisk, *Griechisches Etymologisches Wörterbuch* [Vol 1; Heidelberg: Carl Winter, 1960], 18). Interestingly, αβυσσος is also commonly associated with the sea (Charntraine, *Dictionnaire Etymologique de la Langue Grecque: Histoire des Mots* [rev. and exp. ed.; Paris: Klincksieck, 1999], 201).

<sup>54</sup> Marvin H. Pope, *El in the Ugaritic Texts* (SVT; Leiden: Brill, 1955), 72. One text reads ša *apsi anāku*, “I am of *apsû*”; i.e., of Ea (*CAD* 2:195-7).

<sup>55</sup> *CAD* 1:196.

<sup>56</sup> *CAD* 12:218-20.

<sup>57</sup> The line reads, “She (Lamaštu) seizes an old man they shall call her Destruction (*pasūsātum*)” (*CAD* 12:226). Cf. also the noun *pissatu* “cancelation” (*CAD* 12:426).

annulment and obliteration like the (often freestanding) Hebrew אָפָּס. Both of these Akkadian terms will assist in the analysis of אָפָּס.

The Aramaic root אָפָּס carries connotations like the Hebrew אָפָּס. Like its Hebrew cognate, the Aramaic noun אָפָּס denotes “extremity,” whereas the verb may be translated “to be gone.” According to Jastrow, the verbal form of אָפָּס derives from the root פָּסָס or “cut off.”<sup>58</sup> Within the Targumim, one never finds the Aramaic אָפָּס as a gloss for the Hebrew אָפָּס.<sup>59</sup> Additionally, Syriac does not appear to have a cognate of אָפָּס meaning “end.” The Peshitta usually translates אָפָּס with other glosses.<sup>60</sup> While Aramaic provides little additional cognate material for our understanding of אָפָּס, the Targumim usually demonstrate a different understanding of the Hebrew אָפָּס than simply “extremity.” The Semitic cognates have shown that the root אָפָּס signifies an end, cosmic extremity, or cessation.

### 3.2 אָפָּס in the Hebrew Bible

The Hebrew root אָפָּס contains several of the nuances of these cognate languages. The term may function as an adverb to signify an exception, or more commonly as a noun to denote non-existence, “nothing,” or “the ends” of the earth. The exact etymology is difficult. Although many see the Akkadian *apsû* as the source for the Hebrew אָפָּס,

<sup>58</sup> *Dictionary of the Targumim, the Talmud Babli and Yerushalmi, and the Midrashic Literature* (Peabody, MA: Hedrickson, 2005), 106.

<sup>59</sup> When not using additional glossing, translators often used other words: לְחוּד (to be finished), נְלִים (except), אִיתָה (there is not), בְּרֵם אָרֵי (however), סָק (come to an end), לְמָא (naught), אֲרֹע (destruction), בְּלָא “like nothing,” and עַמְּדָעַם (“ends of the earth”) for אָפָּס in every instance. The Aramaic סִיף מְדֻעַם commonly translates “end or extremity”; the verb סָוִף translates the Hebrew verb אָפָּס (Cf. other Hebrew words [e.g., Isa 5:26], יְרַכָּה [e.g., Isa 14:13], קָצָה [Isa 8:9]).

<sup>60</sup> E.g., בָּשׂת (perish); בְּשִׁתָּה (destruction or ruin); בְּשִׁתָּה בְּשִׁתָּה (like nothing); מְזֻמָּה (empty); “vain,” or “useless;” נָאָת, “naught.” The phrase אֲפָּסִי אָרֵץ is translated בְּשִׁתָּה בְּשִׁתָּה “furthest ends of the earth” in Isaiah 45:22 and 52:10, while the (seemingly) synonymous Hebrew expression קָצָה הָאָרֶץ is never translated as בְּשִׁתָּה בְּשִׁתָּה, but instead בְּשִׁתָּה בְּשִׁתָּה (ends of the earth; see below).

Lipiński claims the origin is the proto-Semitic *pss* (“to annul, come to an end”).<sup>61</sup>

Although the exact relationship of these presumed lexical relatives is challenging, one quickly surmises that the word אָפֵס in biblical Hebrew signifies limitative clauses, describes a state of nonexistence, and refers to the limits of the world (or cosmos?) in the phrase אָפֵסִי אֶרֶץ.<sup>62</sup> In other words, the expression אָפֵסִי אֶרֶץ appears to be unique among the other nuances of אָפֵס as we will soon see. Before examining אָפֵס in Isaiah, we will investigate the use of the term in its verbal, nominal, and phrasal forms through the rest of the Hebrew Bible; subsequently, we will consider Isaiah’s usage.

### 3.2.1 The Verb אָפֵס

The infrequent (5x) verbal form of אָפֵס describes the cessation of the subject. The verb אָפֵס means “to be at an end,” or “to be no more” and is always vocalized as a *Qal*

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<sup>61</sup> Cf. Jastrow above.

<sup>62</sup> Perhaps Hamp may be correct in claiming that it “is not possible” to discern the etymology (“אָפֵס,” *TDOT* 1:361). There is little disagreement that the phrase אָפֵסִי אֶרֶץ may have some connection with the Akkadian *apsū*. Yet Pope, like others, claims the Hebrew phrase אָפֵסִי אֶרֶץ comes from “the notion that the *apsū* was located in the far distance. The meaning of ‘non-existence’ would naturally develop from the idea of extremity, end” (*El in the Ugaritic Texts*, 72). This ‘natural’ development is not apparent to all. Lipiński legitimately notes that “it is not easy to establish a semantic link between the Sumero-Akkadian a b z u > *apsū* and the use of ‘ps outside of the expression ‘apsē-’eres’” (“Il n'est pas facile d'établir un lien sémantique entre l'emploi suméro-akkadien de a b z u > *apsū* et l'usage du terme ‘ps en dehors de l'expression ‘apsē-’eres’” [“Emprunts suméro-akkadiens en hébreu biblique” *ZAH* 1(1988):63]). Instead he offers the proto-Semitic root *pss* which, if transcribed correctly, is found only in Ps 12:2. With such scant evidence it is difficult to arrive at a satisfying conclusion. As we will see below, regardless of its provenience, the noun and verb אָפֵס do not necessarily contain the idea of a physical “end” but instead nonexistence or metaphorical “end,” while the phrase אָפֵסִי אֶרֶץ always refers to “the great beyond.” Thus, while speculative, this word may have merged in some fashion from the two roots: *pss*, “to be terminated” and *apsū* “the extremities of the earth.” There does seem to be some semantic overlap (cf. אָפֵסִים below) and the Ugaritic occurrence of *aps* seems to indicate a physical end.

Philippe Reymond believes the phrase speaks of the water that “surrounds the entire earth and spreads infinitely” (“Encerclant toute la terre, ses eaux s'étalent jusqu'à l'infini” [*L'eau, sa vie, et sa signification dans l'Ancien Testament*] (VTSupp. 6, Leiden: Brill, 1958), 170-1]).

stative.<sup>63</sup> For example, אָפָּס twice describes the Egyptians who have *run out* of money (תִּמְמָן, Gen 47:15-16). The author links אָפָּס with the synonymous תִּמְמָן.<sup>64</sup> The Psalmist uses אָפָּס to ask whether YHWH’s faithfulness has ceased (האָפָּס) or if the Lord’s word has come to an end (גָּמָר, Ps 77:9 [77:8 Eng.]). In this instance the term is also parallel to גָּמָר “to come to an end.” Below, we will consider two more instances of words paired with the verbal form of אָפָּס in Isaiah (תִּמְמָן [2x], בְּלָה, בְּרָת; Isa 16:4, 29:20). Thus far, we have seen that the verb אָפָּס describes the termination of a subject or its lack of existence.

### 3.2.2 The Noun אָפָּס

We will now look at the more frequent (43x) nominal form of אָפָּס.<sup>65</sup> This lexeme describes an “extremity” of an object *only* when in the phrase אָפָּסִי אֶרֶץ; in addition to a few idiomatic phases, it commonly denotes nonexistence—that which is beyond the end (i.e., nothingness). When denoting “nothing,” סָלֵם is often used adverbially.

Frequently the noun אָפָּס overlaps semantically with the adverb אין/אֵין.<sup>66</sup> In 2 Samuel 9:3, one reads of David’s desire to find one of Saul’s descendants. David first asks, “*Is there* anyone left of Saul’s house?” (הִכִּי יָלַשׁ עוֹד אֲשֶׁר נוֹתֵר לְבֵית שָׁאוֹל), 9:1). After

<sup>63</sup> HALOT, 79. This is also found in 1QHa Col. xxi:10. According to Walke and O’Conner, this stative is used to describe a “circumstance or an accident” (§IBHS 22.4d).

<sup>64</sup> Genesis 47:15 begins וַיְהִי הַכָּסֶף מִארֶץ מִצְרָיִם וּמִארֶץ בְּנֵעַ וַיָּבֹא...לְאֹמֶר אָפָּס כָּסֶף (“Then the money ran out from the land of Egypt and the land of Canaan so they came... saying... ‘There is no more money’”).

<sup>65</sup> This number reflects all of the occurrences according to the MT. Conjecture emendations were not tallied (see below). The noun אָפָּס “ankle” is usually listed separately in Lexica because of its different vocalization and meaning (Ezek 47:3). It is not difficult to see the connection between this *hapax* and the sense of the root אָפָּס since the ankles (or “soles” in Targum Jonathan and the Peshitta) as the extremities (אָפָּסִים) of one’s body.

<sup>66</sup> J-M compare אָפָּס to אין and claim the former usually carries “the added nuance of *still more*” (J-M §160n). However, this is difficult to surmise from these contexts. The author does not claim that the two roots overlap entirely semantically, merely that אין provides an adequate synonym that demonstrates the nuances of אָפָּס.

finding Saul's servant Ziba, the king questions, "Is there not anyone left of Saul's house" (הָאֵין עוֹד אִישׁ לְבַית שָׁאוֹל, 9:3; cf. Jer 49:7). Similarly, Deut 32:36 uses the noun אַפָּס as a particle of non-existence. For example, one generally translates אַפָּס עַצָּר וְעַזְזָב "and there is none remaining, bond or free" (ESV). With a preposition, אַפָּס seems to imply "without" or "lack." Consider also Job 7:6:

ימֵי קָלוּ מִנִּיאָרָג וַיָּכְלוּ בְּאַפָּס תָּקוֹה	my days are more swift than a weaver's bobbin they expire <i>without</i> hope (cf. Prov 14:28, 26:20; Dan 8:25).
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Like the word אַפָּס functions as a negative answer to a yes-no question: "Is anyone with you? And one replies 'No'" (Amos 6:10, cf. Judg. 4:20 הַיְשָׁפָה אִישׁ וְאָמַרְתָּ אַפָּס אֵין, "Is anyone here? You shall say, 'No'"). In these instances, the noun אַפָּס signifies a lack of existence or that someone or something has metaphorically "come to an end."

### 3.2.3 Expressions with אַפָּס

Three idiomatic phrases contain אַפָּס and express an idea usually distinct from the freestanding noun. We will examine the following: אַפָּס כִּי, אַפָּס עַד, and אַפָּס בַּי.

#### 3.2.3.1 אַפָּס כִּי

The phrase אַפָּס כִּי occurs five times<sup>67</sup> as a limitative construction used "to introduce an exception after a positive statement."<sup>68</sup> Similar to the Phoenician *aps* we considered above,<sup>69</sup> the Hebrew אַפָּס may be translated "however," "yet," "except," or "nevertheless." The construction אַפָּס כִּי limits or excludes the "implications arising from the content of an expression preceding it" or "something or someone in the (usually

<sup>67</sup> Num 13:28, Deut 15:4, Judg 4:9, 2 Sam 12:14, Amos 9:8. Some see the textually difficult 1 Sam 1:5 as another example based on the Gr (LXX<sup>B</sup>) πλὴν οὐτι that usually translates (HALOT; Hamp "אַפָּס כִּי," 361), yet this reading is not unanimous (cf. e.g., P. Kyle McCarter Jr., *I Samuel* [AB 8; Garden City, NY, 1980], 52).

<sup>68</sup> J-M §173a.

<sup>69</sup> Hoftijzer and Jongeling, "אַפָּס," 1:97.

preceding) context.”<sup>70</sup> For example, **אַפָּס כִּי לֹא יְהִי־בָּכְךָ אָבִיוֹן כִּי־בָּרְכָּךָ יְהָוָה** (However, there will be no poor among you, for YHWH will surely bless you; Deut 15:4). Two instances of **אַפָּס** also have this nuance even though they do not contain **כִּי** (Num 22:35 and 23:13).<sup>71</sup>

### 3.2.3.2 **אַפָּס עוֹד**

Although less common, the phrase **אַפָּס/אַפָּסִי עוֹד** expresses the idea of exclusivity, “to be singular” or “there is no other.” GKC understand it to have a *non nisi*, “only,” sense.<sup>72</sup> The idiom comes from the mouth of one possessing self-confidence and trust: **זֹאת הַעִיר אַפָּסִי עוֹד הַעֲלִיזָה הַיּוֹשְׁבָת לְבָטָח הָמְרָה בְּלַבְבָּה אָנָּי וְאַפָּסִי עוֹד** (“Is this the exultant city, the one stationed securely, the one saying in her heart, ‘I am and there is no other’”; Zeph 2:15= Isa 47:8<sup>73</sup>; Isa 47:10).

### 3.2.3.3 **אַפָּסִי אָרֶץ**

By far the most common phrase that contains the root **אַפָּס**, as well as the one found in the passage under consideration (Isa 45:22), is **אַפָּסִי אָרֶץ** or “the ends of the earth.” As we have seen, there does not seem to be substantial overlap between the Hebrew **אַפָּס** and its presumed Akkadian ancestor *apsû*, nor have there been any aquatic implications; yet **אַפָּסִי אָרֶץ** may provide the closest parallel.

<sup>70</sup> BHRG §41.4.4.1.a; emphasis original.

<sup>71</sup> The angel of YHWH commands Balaam later to speak only what God places in his mouth (Num 22:38). This nuance is also found at Qumran “Yet they did not know that my steps are from you” (1QHa Col. x:33).

<sup>72</sup> GKC §152.s. In these instances Gesenius claims **אַפָּס** contains a paragogic **וֹ** (e.g., Isa 47:8). J-M, however, claim that it is the pronominal suffix “Me and *my exclusivity* still (is)” that is to say “Me, and me exclusively (=only me), I exist!” (Jouon §160n). The author follows the latter understanding.

<sup>73</sup> Zephaniah places this taunt on the lips of Assyria, while Isaiah does so to Babylon.

The exact phrase אַפְסִי אָרֶץ occurs 14 times in the MT (2x in Isaiah).<sup>74</sup> One finds the expression used independently (Deut 33:17, 1 Sam 2:10, Ps 2:8), with the adjective כל to describe universality (כָּל אַפְסִי אָרֶץ; Isa 45:22, 52:10; Ps 22:28, 67:8; 98:3; Prov 30:4), and with prepositions relating to extent (עַד, Zech 9:10, Ps 72:8;<sup>75</sup> ל, Ps 59:14) and source (מִן, Jer 16:19).

This idiom may be the closest parallel to the Akkadian *apsû* referenced above. Two times the expression contains an aquatic context. Psalm 72:8 and Zechariah 9:10 (cf. Sirach 44:22 [MS B]) all share the bi-colon מִים עַד־יָם וּמִנָּהָר עַד־אַפְסִי אָרֶץ (“from sea to sea, from *the river* until **the ends of the earth**”). While it is beyond the scope of this paper to investigate the cosmology from which this expression derives, many understand אַפְסִי אָרֶץ to be a reference to the waters that surround the earth.<sup>76</sup> Nevertheless, water and cosmological conceptions seem to be secondary in the majority of the references to אַפְסִי אָרֶץ. In addition, the term usually functions as a synecdoche, meaning “everyone,” without any reference to water. Thus far, we have found five major conceptions that

<sup>74</sup> If the *yod* in the phrase עַד אַפְסִי אָרֶץ is indeed paragogic one may claim that the *yod* in אַפְסִי אָרֶץ is also paragogic. Perhaps the Masorites assumed it marked the construct plural and pointed it as such. The *yod* in the former phrase could have been understood as the pronominal suffix (so also J-M) and would not have been “corrected.” If this were the case the phrase could speak of “the ‘*apsû*’ (i.e., water deep) of the earth.” However the Masorites are consistent in understanding אַפְסִי to be a masculine plural construct; additionally, when the term is the grammatical subject, the verb is inflected as plural.

<sup>75</sup> One may take this form in Mic 5:3 in a temporal sense. In light of the preceding context, the comes מַוְשֵׁל מִקְרָם מִימִי עַלְמָם (5:1). YHWH gives them up ... עַד־עַת (5:2). However, the following context speaks of the remnant בְּגִוִּים בְּקָרְבָּם (5:7).

<sup>76</sup> Reymond, *L'eau, sa vie*, 170-1. The identification of the river (נהר) is intriguing. Many times the definite נהר denotes the Euphrates; however, it is difficult to conceive how a *universal* reign would begin at the Euphrates—regardless of ancient cosmology. While speculative, it is possible this expression is closer to the Akkadian concept of *apsû* in the sense of “the deep.” If this were an archaic genitive ending ‘, instead of the masculine plural construct, one may understand these three texts as “he shall rule from sea to sea and from the River until the depth of earth.” This reign would describe the breadth, sea to sea, and depth, waters above to the waters below, of the reign. While extremely laconic, 5Q16 Frag. 1:3 may mention the אַפְסִי of Sheol וּבְאַפְסִין (שאול וּבְאַפְסִין).

derive from the root אָפֵס: 1) the verbal idea of cessation, 2) the noun or adverb describing non-existence, 3) the limitative (אָפֵס כִּי) and 4) exclusive (אָפֵס עוֹד) constructions, and 5) the phrase “ends of the earth” (אָפֵס אֶרְצָה). We will now consider how Isaiah uses four of these conceptions.

### 3.2.4 אָפֵס in Isaiah<sup>77</sup>

Isaiah employs the word אָפֵס more than any other biblical author. The root is found predominately in Isa 40-55 (12x out of 16x) to highlight the exclusivity of YHWH and the relative worthlessness of false gods.

We have seen above that Isaiah relates the verbal form of אָפֵס twice with the concept of cessation. In Isa 16:4, the prophet places אָפֵס in a quatrain synonymously parallel to תִּמְמָה and כָּלָה:

אָפֵס <חָמֹץ> <sup>78</sup>	the oppressor is no more
כָּלָה שָׁد	The devastator has <i>come to an end</i>
תִּמְמָה רָמֶס <רָמֶס> <sup>79</sup>	The one treading is <i>done away</i>
מִן-הָאָרֶץ	from the earth

Moreover, Isa 29:20 also places the verb בָּרַת in a colon parallel to אָפֵס. Thus, one sees in these passages the ideas of “coming to an end” or “being no more,” not unlike the Akkadian *pasāsu* “to obliterate, annul,” or “cancel” seen above.<sup>80</sup>

Although Isaiah usually uses the nominal form of אָפֵס to focus on YHWH’s exclusivity, he also places the form in other contexts. For example, the nominal is used adverbially to denote blamelessness “*without cause*” (Isa 52:4). Once again, this mirrors

<sup>77</sup> See Appendix A-B for Isaiah’s use of אָפֵס relative to the rest of the Hebrew canon.

<sup>78</sup> Read צָמֹת following 1QIs<sup>a</sup>. The MT contains the anomalous צָמָה.

<sup>79</sup> The MT contains a plural form of the verb צָמָה. This is opposed by virtually every witness (1QIs<sup>a</sup>, LXX, Syr., Vg.).

<sup>80</sup> CAD 12:218-20.

another expression with **אין** (Isa 57:1) and simply negates a conditional clause in 54:15 as well.<sup>81</sup>

The noun **אפס** contrasts YHWH's particularity and greatness with that of the idols and their worshippers. As we have seen above, the prophet ironically describes the self-professed exclusivity of haughty Babylon with the phrase **אני אפסי עוד** (Isa 47:8, 10). The wicked nation's declarations stand in stark contrast to the particularity of YHWH. For instance, Isaiah 45:14 has the *exact opposite* confession arising from the mouths of nations who acknowledge Israel's one God. Foreigners announce that God is amongst the Israelites (**אך בך אל**), and that there is no other (**ו אין עוד**)—no god (**אפס אלהים**). In these two instances (Isa 47:8, 10), Isaiah uses **אפס** to describe Babylon's self-proclaimed exclusivity, which serves only as a parody of the unique YHWH, as the nations acknowledge.

The phrase **אפסי ארץ** describes universality in Isaiah twice (45:22 and 52:10). In 52:10, YHWH's cosmic reign receives universal acknowledgment—every nation (**כל-**הָגִוִּים) and all far off (**כָּל-אָפָסִי אָרֶץ**) behold YHWH's salvation-working arm. Within this passage the **אפסי ארץ** are distinct from the people of Israel (see further below). Isaiah 45:22 is another instance of the phrase **אפסי ארץ**, wherein YHWH calls “the ends of the earth” to be saved. Both Isa 45:22 and 52:10 carry the geographic sense of **אפסי ארץ**. However, **אפס** is used repeatedly in and around Isa 45 to describe idols and their worshippers as “nothing,” unlike Isa 52:10. Before we move on to the analysis of form and structure, we must compare **אפסי ארץ** with a synonymous expression.

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<sup>81</sup> The verse reads: **הן נור ינור אפס מאוחתי**, “If someone should indeed contend, [he is] not from me.” Alternatively, one may understand the passage as follows, “Should someone indeed contend, nothing [of his contention will be] from me.”

### 3.2.5 קצה הארץ vs אפס הארץ

One synonym of אפס that deserves particular attention is קצה. This term has significant semantic overlap with אפס, particularly in the phrase “ends of the earth.” To be sure, early translators glossed the two expressions (קצה הארץ and אפס הארץ) identically on numerous occasions.<sup>82</sup> If, as this thesis argues, the use of אפס in Isaiah 45:22 is an instance of paronomasia,<sup>83</sup> it is significant how this more frequent, synonymous term relates to the idiom אפס הארץ in Isaiah.

At first glance, the phrase קצה הארץ is almost indistinguishable from אפס הארץ, yet one may discern a slight difference. The term קצה usually denotes an “edge” or “end” and is found 10 times in the phrase קצה הארץ in Isaiah. Although the distinction between קצה and אפס may be slight, קצה may denote an “end” while אפס the “very end” where the object actually ceases. Two comparisons will make this plain. Consider the following:

Table 3.1 קצה and אפס Minimal Pair #1

Isaiah 5:8	הוי מגעי בית בבית שדה בשדה יקריבו עד אפס מקום והושבתם לבדכם בקרב הארץ Woe to those who join house to house, add field to field, until <i>there is no room</i> and you are made to dwell <i>alone</i> in the midst of the land
Josh 3:8b	כברכם עד-קצתה מי הירדן בירדן תעמדו And when you come to the <i>edge of the waters</i> of the Jordan you shall stand <i>in the Jordan</i>

One discerns two different ideas in these passages: אפס describes a nonexistent location, while קצתה depicts the limit or edge of a substance. In this example, even at the קצתה of the Jordan the waters *are still present*—one may stand in the water. On the other hand, אפס

<sup>82</sup> See Appendices G-H.

<sup>83</sup> According to Greenstein, this is technically “polysemy” and not paronomasia “in which slightly dissimilar sounds or words are entailed” (“Wordplay, Hebrew,” *ABD* 6:970). However, Greenstein admits that such “hard and fast” distinction may work either way.

denotes an absence of a material—no one else may dwell with those swallowing up the land, for there is no space.<sup>84</sup>

One may also distinguish **קצה אפס** and **קצה הארץ** by noting how they function. The phrase **קצה הארץ** describes a *physical* end whereas **אפס הארץ** may often be personified and function as a synecdoche for all humanity, as the following minimal pair seems to indicate:

Table 3.2 **קצה אפס** and **קצה הארץ** Minimal Pair #2

	ונתихך לאור נים להיות ישועתי עד קצה הארץ
Isa 49:6b	I set you as a light to the nations that my salvation might reach the <i>end of the earth</i>
Isa 52:10	חִשְׁפָּךְ יְהוָה אֲתִיזְרוּעַ קְדָשׁוֹ לְעֵינִי כָּל-הָנִינִים וּרְאוּ כָל-אָפָסִי-אָרֶץ אֲתִי יְשׁוּעָתִי אֶלְהִינוּ YHWH has bared his holy arms in the sight of all the nations. And all the <i>ends of the earth</i> shall see the salvation of our God.

Both phrases depict the universal reign of YHWH. However, the root **קצה** is never attributed to an individual and seems to describe a location, as opposed to a group of individuals. Thus, YHWH’s salvation will fill the geographic earth.<sup>85</sup> Therefore, **אפסי הארץ** may uniquely be used for the personification and wordplay found in Isa 45:22.

### 3.3 Summary

By way of summary, we have examined the word **אפס** in various contexts. We have concluded that the etymology of **אפס** is uncertain, deriving from the Semitic root *pss*, the Akkadian *apsû*, or a complicated mix of the two. The Semitic root *'ps* describes an “end” or cessation, although in Hebrew the word root commonly signifies “nothing” or “without” except in the phrase **אפס הארץ**. We considered the use of **אפס** in the Hebrew

<sup>84</sup> Incidentally, Modern Hebrew seems to make this same distinction. **אפס** denotes “nothingness” or “zero” while **קצה** is the “end” or “edge.”

<sup>85</sup> Cf. also Isa 42:10, YHWH’s praise arises from the end of the earth (**מֵקֶצֶת הָאָרֶץ**) from those who descend to the sea (**יָם**) all that fills it (**מֶלֶא**), the coastlands (**אַיִלּוֹן**), and their inhabitants (**יִשְׁבִּיתָה**). Thus the language describes universal geographic adoration of YHWH.

Bible and Isaiah in particular and found that the verb describes the cessation of the subject, whereas the noun signifies “extremity” or “nothing,” and is employed as well as in a few idiomatic expressions. The phrase אַפְסִי אֶרֶץ appears to be unique among the other uses of אַפְסִי and describes the outer reaches of the earth. The prophet Isaiah’s proclivity for the term is most apparent within his polemic against idols and idolaters in 40-55. We now turn to consider the form and structure with which Isaiah communicates these polemics.

#### 4. FORM AND STRUCTURE

This chapter will consider the form and structure of Isaiah 45:22 in the context of 44:24-46:13. Isaiah utilizes two discrete, major forms of literature in Isa 40-55: 1) the polemic genre, subdivided into trial speeches and disputations, and 2) oracles of salvation. After analyzing these literary forms, we will conclude that Isaiah 45:22 is an “oracle of salvation.” The prophet precedes this oracle with a “dispute” form (45:20-21) wherein YHWH contends with the idols and their worshippers to demonstrate that they are “nothing.” We will consider how Isaiah structures his prophecy similarly by alternating the two forms (polemic genre and oracles of salvation) in order to emphasize the contrast of weal and woe. At the conclusion of YHWH’s trial speeches with idolaters and their gods, Isaiah pronounces that false gods and those who worship them are both “nothing” and that idolaters may only find hope in the exclusive Creator.

##### **4.1 Form**

First, we shall note the two general forms, “polemic genre” and “salvation oracle.” Within the former, YHWH takes an individual or group (idols, idolaters, or Israel) to court, declares that they are comparatively “nothing,” and announces that only YHWH is Lord. Then, by means of salvation oracles, YHWH displays his preeminence and beckons his vanquished adversary, Israel and/or the nations, to recognize the exclusivity of Israel’s God and to find confidence and assistance in him.

#### 4.1.1 Polemic Genre

The first major form of literature is the “polemic genre.”<sup>86</sup> This form contains argumentative speech most commonly used to argue that YHWH alone is God. One may sub-classify this genre into “trial speeches” or “disputations.”

The prophet uses the first subclass of the polemic genre, “trial speech,” to castigate idols in Isaiah 40-55. The more general type of legal argument, *rib*, consists of a legal dispute initiated by a Suzerain whose covenant has been violated. This form appears elsewhere (e.g., Isa 1).<sup>87</sup> The “trial speech,” however, functions distinctly as a “defence of Yahwe’s claims” with a “conclusion that the claims of the adversary are false.”<sup>88</sup> The theological intent, therefore, is “to establish Yahwe’s sovereign greatness against the nothingness of the pagan gods.”<sup>89</sup> Isaiah introduces these trial speeches through various methods including rhetorical questions (מִ, e.g., 40:12), summons (נִקְרָבָה, e.g., 41:1), and accusation (הַנְּאָתָה, 41:24). The interjection הַן occasionally introduces the legal conclusion in Isaiah (e.g., הַנִּבְשָׂו וַיְכַלְמָו כָּל הַנְּחָרִים בְּךָ, 41:11; cf. Isa 32:1; 33:7; 41:24, 29; 42:1; 44:11; 50:9, 11; 54:15; 55:4-5; 59:1) as well as an answer to rhetorical questions

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<sup>86</sup> Little agreement exists about specific literary sub-genres. Most recognize a clear polemic that is leveled against false gods, the nations who worship them, and/or Israel (Eugene H. Merrill, “The Literary Character of Isaiah 40-55, Part 1: Survey of a Century of Studies on Isaiah 40-55” *BibSac* 144 [1987]: 34). The author’s classifications are largely dependent on Schoors, *I Am God Your Saviour*. There are several other works on prophetical forms (e.g., Claus Westermann, *Basic Forms of Prophetic Speech* [trans., Hugh Clayton White; Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1991], cf. Robert H. O’Connell, *Concentricity and Continuity: The Literary Structure of Isaiah* [JSSOT 188; ed. David J.A. Clines, et al.; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1994], 29-33).

<sup>87</sup> For a brief survey and extensive bibliography of the literature on the *rib* form see O’Connell, *Concentricity and Continuity*, 32. O’Connell rightly understands that Isaiah’s “main rhetorical concern seems to lie within the sphere of the divine-human covenant” (*ibid.*).

<sup>88</sup> Schoors, *I Am God Your Saviour*, 239.

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*, 240.

(Isa 40:15 [2x]; 50:1, 2; cf. 49:21; 58:3, 4). In these two sub-forms, Isaiah describes YHWH's dispute with his adversaries.

These legal proceedings contain two to three characters. YHWH both presides and prosecutes in the legal decision, whereas the court defendants are either the nations (e.g., 40:13-17; 41:11-12, 28), their gods (e.g., 41:29; 44:9-17), or Israel (e.g., 43:8). Isaiah argues that YHWH did not appoint Israel to be in the dock but his witness (ע, 43:10, 12; 44:8); yet because of the nation's sin, YHWH condemns her (59:2). Therefore, YHWH foreordains and foretells of Cyrus in order to demonstrate God's power over creation and the course of humankind so that Israel might know that YHWH alone is God (45:1-5; 48:5-8; cf. Exod 9:16). YHWH calls Israel to play the role of his witness within the proceedings that they might attest to his exclusivity and vindicate their worship of him, thereby condemning the idols along with the idolaters.

Isaiah 45:20-21 follows this “trial speech” form. First, YHWH calls the פְּלִיטִים *negaim* הַקְבִּצּוּ וּבָאוּ הַתְּנַשְׁׁוּ יְחִדּוֹ to gather together and draw near for judgment (הַקְבִּצּוּ וּבָאוּ הַתְּנַשְׁׁוּ יְחִדּוֹ). Then he berates his opponents with questions: “Who has made this heard long ago? Who declared it?” (45:21b). The prophet concludes this small trial with the declaration: “Was it not I, YHWH? And there is no other god” (45:21c).

The second subtype of the polemic genre is “disputation,” which serves to emphasize either YHWH's nature as Creator, his sovereignty over the cosmos, or a combination of the two.<sup>90</sup> Isaiah utilizes this form to show that YHWH “is able to help his people... and that he does so in a manner which pleases him.”<sup>91</sup>

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<sup>90</sup> Ibid., 294.

<sup>91</sup> Ibid.

By means of these two polemic forms, Isaiah puts the gods on trial, proves them deficient, and proclaims that YHWH alone can deliver from present and future distress. All other gods and nations are judged to be helpless and hopeless—utter nothingness. Both polemic genres function, Scheuer says, “as literary devices for announcing salvation and for giving hope to Israel, [and] also as devices for warning the Israelites against appropriating for themselves the cultic practices of the nations.”<sup>92</sup> Isaiah 45:20-21 follows the trial speech form and builds up to the salvation oracle found in 45:22-25.

#### 4.1.2 Salvation Oracle

Isaiah uses the second major literary form, “salvation oracles,” not to condemn but exult in YHWH’s salvation. The passages that contain this form are marked by an assurance of salvation and are typically organized in a specific pattern. Schoors finds in the oracles of salvation a threefold framework (e.g., Isa 41:8-13):

- A. the assurance of Yahwe’s intervention;
- B. the clauses, which express the consequence of the divine intervention and deal with the reversal of the situation of distress;
- C. the final aims of Yahwe’s intervention.<sup>93</sup>

Isaiah intersperses these paeans of YHWH’s deliverance with the trial speeches (see below).

Isaiah 45:22-25 should be classified as a salvation oracle. Although Schoors labels 45:20-25 as a trial speech, he recognizes that the form is “not pure” since, according to his taxonomy, oracles of salvation only address masculine singular referents;

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<sup>92</sup> *The Return of YHWH: The Tension between Deliverance and Repentance in Isaiah 40-55* (BZAW; New York, 2008), 101.

<sup>93</sup> This arrangement has been copied verbatim from Schoors, *I Am God Your Saviour*, 40.

for this reason, he does not classify 45:22-25 as an oracle of salvation.<sup>94</sup> While the passage does not contain the proper order, it nonetheless contains each element:

B. Reversal	פנו-אלֵי וְהוֹשָׁעָנוּ כָּל-אָפָּסִי-אָרֶץ כִּי אַנְּיָאֵל וְאֵין עוֹד	Turn to me and be saved all you nothings/ends <sup>95</sup> of the earth For I am God and there is no other
A. Assurance of YHWH's intervention	בַּיְנְשָׁבָעִי צָא מִפְּצָדָקָה	I have sworn by myself justification has gone out from my mouth
C. Final aim	דְּבָר וְלֹא יָשׁוּב כִּי-לִי תִּכְרֹעַ כְּלִבְרָד תִּשְׁבַּע כְּלִלְשׁוֹן אֵך בֵּיהוּה לִי אָמֵר צְדָקָות וְעֹז עֲדִיו יִבּוֹא וַיְבִשּׁוּ כָּל הַנְּחָרִים בָּוּ: בֵּיהוּצְדָקָו וַיְתַהֲלָלָו: כְּלִזְרָע יִשְׂרָאֵל:	a word that shall not return. For to me every knee shall bow every tongue swear Only in YHWH is it said of me are righteousness and strength to him shall they come and be ashamed those who were incensed at him In YHWH are they justified and glorified all the seed of Jacob

Although unique, Isa 45:22-25 may be classified as a salvation oracle.<sup>96</sup> Thus, the passage under investigation is an oracle of salvation immediately following a trial speech (45:20-21). Within Isa 40-55, the prophet intermittently juxtaposes the two major forms, polemics and words of consolation. These passages blend together to evince and glory in the incomparability of YHWH. Next, we consider how Isaiah structures his prophecy to highlight this contrast.

<sup>94</sup> Ibid., 237.

<sup>95</sup> See below.

<sup>96</sup> Baltzer also struggles with the classification and concludes it is part of a “throne scene” (*Deutero-Isaiah*, 248). O’Connell understands the greater context (45:14-46:2) as “a threat against foreign idols and nations that functions as a consolation of Israel/Jacob since it promises them vindication (*Concentricity and Continuity*, 187).

## 4.2 Structure of Isaiah

Isaiah lays out his prophecy in the general structure of woe to weal to garner trust and faith in YHWH and in order to provoke Judah to return to her God, who alone provides help and hope.<sup>97</sup> The entire prophecy communicates YHWH's purposes for the disobedient eighth-century Judah. After Israel's God punishes his people for their disobedience, he promises to restore them for his glory. The book of Isaiah may be generally outlined as follows:

### 1-39 A Disobedient People

- 1-12 *Who is king?* YHWH and his appointed vice-regent.
- 13-23 *Who is Lord of every nation?* YHWH, therefore all nations are accountable.
- 24-27 *Who is judge?* YHWH and he will bring all to right.
- 28-39 *What is he doing with his people?* He disciplines them for their covenant disobedience.

### 40-66 A People Restored

- 40-55 *Who can restore?* YHWH alone can restore for his glory.
- 56-66 *What will his kingdom look like?* YHWH's kingdom will be characterized by universal righteousness and justice.

The highest concentration of the two polemic genres, as well as the salvation oracles may be found in Isa 40-55. In this section, the most forceful and overt polemics function to emphasize that YHWH alone restores Israel for his glory. In the midst of describing the majesty of Israel's Sovereign and the redemption he brings, Isaiah uses the

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<sup>97</sup> While many have attempted to separate these distinct forms into diverse sources, this overlooks the continuity of the book. Some see the trial speeches as "non-Isaian insertions" (e.g., Richard J. Clifford, "The Function of Idol Passages in Second Isaiah," *CBQ* 42 [1980]: 450). Yet the juxtaposition of these forms is intentional. To take one example, the transition from the weal of the end of 40 to the beginning of woe of 41 the passage hinges on the word חָלֵף. Those hoping in YHWH renew their strength (יחליפו כח, 40:31) while YHWH summons the nations/idols to renew their strength in preparation for his trial speech (יחליפו כח, 41:1). See also below.

polemic genres to magnify YHWH and to deprecate other gods.<sup>98</sup> This type of transition has already been seen in Isa 45. Inasmuch as he has discredited all other sources of help and hope, YHWH alone stands as the One who may redeem.

Isaiah 44:24-46:13 continues the alteration between woe and weal and describes how YHWH exalts Cyrus to restore his people for his glory. This pericope begins with an oracle of salvation: YHWH establishes the future Persian king Cyrus for his own purposes and delight (44:24-45:4) without any assistance, for there is no other god who does this (45:5-6). Next, he transitions into dispute language as YHWH's nature as Creator is juxtaposed with the helplessness of created gods (45:7-19).<sup>99</sup> Preceded by an introductory formula (*הַקְבִּץ...הַתְּנַשֵּׁל*, 45:20), a short trial speech in Isaiah 45:20-21 concludes with a verdict: “There is no other god who justifies and delivers, not one” (45:21). Chapter 45 ends with a salvation oracle—YHWH’s sure word has guaranteed his salvation to those who turn to him (45:22-25). The following chapter continues the theme of Cyrus’ domination and primarily consists of the two polemic genres: a dispute (46:1-4), trial speech (46:5), and another dispute (46:6-11). The first dispute contrasts how the idols must *be carried* by beasts while YHWH carries Israel (46:1-4). In a brief trial speech, YHWH interrogates (*רָא*) his opponent (46:5) and once again proclaims the incomparability of Israel’s God, through a second dispute in the chapter (46:6-11). Chapter 46 closes with a brief oracle of salvation promising the eventual vindication of

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<sup>98</sup> According to Jeffrey J. Niehaus, YHWH’s theophanies bring both salvation and judgment under the auspices of the covenant (*God at Sinai: Covenant and Theophany in the Bible and Ancient Near East* [SOTBT; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1995], 142).

<sup>99</sup> Clifford agrees that the passage is full of “vivid contrasts essential to preaching” (“The Function of Idol Passages,” 451). Moreover the idol passages serve as a foil to the relationship between Israel and YHWH (*ibid.*, 464).

sinful Israel (46:13). Thus, by alternating these different forms within this section (44:24-46:13), Isaiah describes the exclusive Creator's restoration of Israel by means of his anointed Cyrus.

The Creator of all nations extends his hand to all. Having once again demonstrated the sheer incomparability of YHWH and the relative worthlessness of every other nation or god, the Sovereign calls those far off (at “the ends of the earth,” אפסי ארץ), who are like the do-nothing idols (“nothings of the earth,” אפסי ארץ), to turn to him for salvation (45:22, see below). Since all else is wanting, Isaiah shows that the only source of hope and help for *all* humanity is YHWH. This is done, in part, through the intertwining of polemic and salvation oracle forms. The passage may be structured as follows:

44:24-45:8	Oracle of Salvation
45:9-19	Dispute
45:20-21	Trial Speech
45:22-25	Oracle of Salvation
46:1-4	Dispute
46:5	Trial Speech
46:6-11	Dispute
46:13	Oracle of Salvation

#### 4.3 Summary

Isaiah arranges his prophecy to transition from woe (1-39) to weal (40-66) in order to communicate how YHWH alone can restore and redeem. Within Isa 45, he illustrates the inadequacy of false gods and those who serve them by using three specific forms: oracles of salvation, disputes, and trial speeches. Schoors rightly concludes that “the unicity of Yahwe” is the intention of the trial speech and salvation oracles within 45:20-25. YHWH’s exclusivity and uniqueness reinforces Isaiah’s audience with confidence in the

only Creator and Deliverer.<sup>100</sup> We will now see how this theme of YHWH's incomparability flows throughout the book.

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<sup>100</sup> Schoors, *I Am God Your Saviour*, 237.

## 5. LITERARY-THEOLOGICAL CONTEXT OF ISAIAH 45

The incomparability of YHWH is a major literary theme in Isa 40-55 and contrasts with the utter nothingness of the idols and idolaters. Through the various trial scenes described above, Isaiah shows that Israel's God alone stands as a source of hope and help for eighth-century Judah—no one and nothing else remotely corresponds to him. This chapter will examine the uniqueness of YHWH in comparison to the insignificant idols, and will demonstrate that, inasmuch as one becomes what he or she worships, those who worship inconsequential images are accounted as “nothing” (אֶפְתָּחָה).

### 5.1 Incomparability of YHWH vs. Insignificance of Idols/Idolaters

From the beginning of the book YHWH's incomparability is emphasized. Israel's Sovereign brings a covenant lawsuit (*rīb*) against his people for transgressing his Law—the first commandment of which is to worship YHWH exclusively.<sup>101</sup> The God and Creator of all, not merely the local high place, directs the course of history and raises up nations to punish his people according to his covenant stipulations. Despite Israel's disobedience, YHWH purposed to save her through his own might, with no assistance from other gods or any created thing in order that Israel might receive his blessing once again and subsequently bless all nations. Isaiah demonstrates that YHWH is the sole source of hope and a genuine succor.

Isaiah proves YHWH's incomparability by describing his matchless character. Throughout Isaiah 40-55, YHWH discloses his own uniqueness and character. The

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<sup>101</sup> The author recognizes the presence of the theme of obedience/disobedience to the Law in Isaiah but acknowledges that the topic is beyond the nature of the present work (e.g., the earth is laid waste because of the violation of the ancient covenant [הָפְרָא בְּרִית עָלָם, 24:5]; law obedience (טָשֵׁפָה) is not found in the land [1:16]).

refrain appears eight times in Isaiah 45 alone.<sup>102</sup> The God of Israel reveals himself (... אָנוֹ יְהוָה) as the only YHWH (יְהוָה הָוָא שְׁמֵי), 42:8, 51:15; cf. Isa 43:3, 11, 13; 45:5, 6, 18, 22; 46:9; 48:17; 49:23), creator (עֲשָׂה/בָּרוּא), 43:15, 44:24; cf. 48:13), king (מֶלֶכְכֶם), 43:25), protector of his vineyard (נָצַר), 27:2), defender (אָרִיב), 49:25; cf. 54:11), comforter (מְנֻחָמָכֶם), 51:12), savior (מּוֹשִׁיעַ/אֹוְשִׁיעַ), 49:26, 26), preparer (לִפְנֵיךְ), 45:2; cf. 45:13), the first and the last (רָאשֵׁון/אַחֲרֵון)<sup>103</sup>, 41:4, 44:6, 48:12), the one *with* Israel (עִמֶּךְ/אַתֶּךְ), 41:1; 43:2, 5), Israel's God (אֱלֹהִיךְ), 41:10, 13; 43:3; 48:17), the strengthener (מְחִזֵּיךְ), 41:13), helper (עֹזָתְךָ), 13), covenant keeper (אָהָבְתְּךָ), 43:4; cf. 46:4), answerer (אָעָנוּם), 41:17), and declarer of the future (קְרָאתְךָ/מְגִיד), 42:6, 9; 43:12; 45: 3, 7, 8, 12; cf. Isa 43:10; 45:18; 48:12, 15, 16; 52:6; 54:16 [2x]). YHWH's manifold perfections are inextricably linked to his character.

Isaiah fills the trial speeches with rhetorical questions, using the refrain “Who (מי) is like YHWH?” Forty-three of the 61 occurrences of מי in Isa are placed within 40-55, only Job uses מי more frequently than Isaiah. Not unlike Job 38, the prophet depicts YHWH as berating his adversaries with questions in order to demonstrate his uniqueness: Who created the cosmos? (40:12, 26); who aids YHWH in his plan? (40:13-14); who can stay his hand? (43:13; cf. 14:27); to whom may he be compared? (דָמָה); who is his likeness? (דָמָות), 40:18, 25); who is like him? (כָּמוֹנִי), 44:7); who stirs up Cyrus for his purpose? (41:2); who ordains and declares the future (41:4, 26; 45:21)? The reply, implied or explicit is הַלְוָא אָנָי יְהוָה וְאֵין־עוֹד (Is it not I, YHWH, and no one else? 45:21).

<sup>102</sup> This is the fourth most in one chapter for the entire Hebrew Bible: Lev 19 (16x), 22 (9x); Ezek 20 (9x), Isa 45 (8x). Furthermore, four of these in Isa are in the expression אָנָי יְהוָה אֱלֹהִיךְ (41:10, 13; 43:3; 48:17).

<sup>103</sup> Isaiah may build this declaration to a crescendo. He begins אָנָי יְהוָה רָאשֵׁון וְאַחֲרֵון וְאָהָבְתְּךָ (41:4), “I am YHWH—the first and with the last,” אָנָי רָאשֵׁון וְאֵין אַחֲרֵון (44:6), “I am the first, I am the last,” אָנָי רָאשֵׁון אַף אָנָי אַחֲרֵון (48:12), “I am the first, indeed, I am the last.”

Other biblical writers also emphasize YHWH's incomparability. Several of these questions may be found throughout the Bible. Consider, for example the following queries: “Who is like you/me [YHWH]?” (מי כמוך, Exod 15:11 [2x], Deut 33:29; Mic 7:18; Ps 35:10, 71:19; 89:9; מי כמוני, Isa 44:7; Jer 49:19, 50:44; cf. Job 36:22, Neh 6:11); who is a god (מי אל) who acts as mightily? (Deut 3:24); what god is there except (מי אל) for YHWH? (2 Sam 22:32); what god (מי אל) acts so graciously and forgives? (Mic 7:18); what god (מי אל) is as holy and awesome as YHWH (Mic 7:18)? Even the name of Isaiah's contemporary Micah's name means “Who is like YHWH?”<sup>104</sup> The biblical writers continually emphasize that YHWH is unique.

One of the first ways in which Israel learns of YHWH's matchless character is the exodus—the definitive moment when YHWH reveals exactly who he is. Indeed, YHWH responds unforgettably to Pharaoh's reviling words “Who is YHWH?” (מי יהוה, Exod 5:2). The haughty king and his people will know who speaks the words “I am YHWH” (וַיַּדְעַ בְּנֵי אָנָי יהוה, Exod 14:4). The awesome events of the exodus leave the covenant community not with the question, “Who *is* YHWH?” but “Who *is like* YHWH?” The congregation will sing, “Who is like you among the gods, YHWH? Who is like you (מי כמוכה באלים) majestic in holiness, dreadful in praise, working wonders? (Exod 15:11).<sup>105</sup> Similarly, the Psalms reverberate with the question who, like the God of Jacob, delivers? (מציל, Ps 35:10); who possesses else righteous? (צדקה, Ps 71:19); who among the heavenly host is comparable? (בני אלים, Ps 89:6); or who else is enthroned on high

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<sup>104</sup> Throughout the Hebrew Bible other individuals have similar names that ask comparable questions (אלה, “Who is like God?”; מיכהו, “Who is like him?”; מיכיה or מיכיהו, “Who is like YHWH?”).

<sup>105</sup> Space does not permit a thorough analysis of YHWH's exclusive characteristics expressed through the Bible, let alone the exodus. Needless to say, Exod 34:5-7 offers a small, but significant list of the characteristics that set YHWH apart (cf. Mic 7:18-20!).

מִי כְּמַנִּי לְשַׁבֵּת (Ps 113:5)? When YHWH asks (Who is like me?, Isa 44:7; cf.

40:18, 25), the community has learned to reply with one voice, אין (<span>There is no one).

Nothing and no one compares to YHWH—he is completely unique. The exact phrase אין עוד is specifically emphasized in Isa 45:5, 6, 18 (46:9; cf. 1 Kgs 8:60, Joel 2:27). There is nil (אפס, Isa 45:6, 14; 46:9), nothing (נִאֵן, Isa 42:26 [3x], 28 [2x]; 43:11, 12, 13; 44:6, 8, 12; 45:5, 6, 14, 21 [2x], 22; 50:2 [4x]; cf. 40:16, 17; cf. Ps 86:8) besides (וְלֹא, Isa 43:11; 44:6, 8; 45:6, 21, cf. 36:10) or apart (וְלֹא, Isa 45:5, 21) from him.<sup>106</sup> Isaiah reiterates time and again that there is no god but YHWH.<sup>107</sup> While many attributes describe the incomparable God of Israel, Isaiah anchors YHWH's particularity in his *exclusivity*. For example, consider Isa 45:5-6:

I am YHWH	<u>אני יהוה</u>
and there is no other	וְאֵין עוֹד
besides me there is no god	וְלֹא תְּאֵן אֱלֹהִים
I strengthen you	אָזַרְךָ
yet you do not know me	וְלֹא יְדַעַתָּנִי
so that they may know	לֹמְדָנָה מִמְזוֹרָה-שְׁמָשָׁה
from the rising of the sun	וּמִמְרָבָה
and from the west	בַּיַּמִּים בְּלֹא
that there is none apart from me	אֵין כְּמֵהוּ
I am YHWH	<u>אני יהוה</u>
and there is no other	וְאֵין עוֹד

<sup>106</sup> A non-theological illustration of uniqueness may be seen in 1 Sam 21:10, where David speaks with Ahimelek about Goliath's sword. Ahimelek says that there is no weapon except for it where he is אין אחריתו זולתה בה ואמור דוד אין כמותה.

Some see the *šəma'* as another instance of describing YHWH's uniqueness, "Yahweh is our God, Yahweh alone" (J.C.L. Gibson, *Language and Imagery in the Old Testament* [Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1998], 28).

<sup>107</sup> As Labuschagne says, "In Deutero-Isaiah, as nowhere else in the Old Testament, God's uniqueness is repeatedly emphasized" (*The Incomparability*, 122-23).

Isaiah reiterates the phrase “there is no other” to describe that exclusivity is part and parcel of *who* YHWH is. The second half of the statement “I am YHWH” is “and there is no other.”<sup>108</sup>

Throughout Scripture, one understands that Israel’s God is entirely “other” and cannot be likened to anything else, for he alone acts in history. Apart from YHWH (יְהֹוָה), no one else saves (מַשְׁיָּע, Hos 13:4). No one else helps in distress (רָאֵע, 2 Chron 14:10) for there is no one with him (עִמִּיךָ, 2 Chr 14:10). Such expressions function, as Labuschagne says, “not merely [as] a *captatio benevolentiae*, but a creedal confession expressing the belief that Yahweh is incomparable as a helper.”<sup>109</sup> Jeremiah 10:16 also declares that YHWH is not like those (לֹא-כְאֱלֹהִים) false idols who have no breath (רוּחַ, Jer 10:14). YHWH is the only God because he is the one who creates, helps, purposes, honors, is present, and is preeminent. The idols and idolaters are a mere parody of YHWH, comparatively nothing.

#### 5.1.1 YHWH is Creator, All Else is Created

YHWH’s nature as Creator distinguishes him from the idols and demonstrates that he is a sufficient source of help. Isaiah focuses on this topic first in ch. 29 and repeats it often in 40-55, describing YHWH as the one who creates (בָּרָא), stretches out creation (גַּתֵּה), and fashions the cosmos (יָצַר; 40:22, 42:5, 44:24, 45:12, 51:13). Not only did YHWH create

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<sup>108</sup> Isa 45:5, 6, 18, 21; cf. 2 Sam 7:22; Isa 43:11; Jer 10:6; Joel 2:27; 1 Chr 17:20; 2 Chr 14:10.

<sup>109</sup> Labuschagne, *The Incomparability*, 87. He continues, “Thus the main idea in the confession of Yahweh’s incomparability in both prayers is that there is no one like Him in whom man in distress can put his trust, for there is none like Him able to help in a struggle” (*ibid.*).

the earth but he even created the idolater who, in turn, fashions the idols.<sup>110</sup> Thus Israel's God is the only sovereign Creator.

YHWH's works are marvelous, whereas idols are the work of human hands. YHWH's deeds (*מעשה*) are wonderful and strange (Isa 25:1 28:21). They involve punishing sins (10:12), enacting salvation in a general sense (3:24; 5:12, 19; 26:12), and redeeming Israel (29:23, 60:21. 64:7). An idol, on the other hand, is created—the *work* of man's hands (*מעשה ידיים*, Isa 2:8, 17:8, 37:19; cf. Hos 8:4; Mic 5:13).<sup>111</sup> While YHWH wisely lays out (*נטה*) the universe, *created* man lays out (*נטה*) the blueprint of his god and *makes it* with skill (Isa 44:12-14).<sup>112</sup> Not only is an idol not self-existent, it also depends on an equally dependent creature. Conversely, YHWH is completely transcendent and everything depends on him.

Since YHWH gives man his very breath, humanity has no right to speak back to his Maker; moreover man would be entirely foolish to seek sustenance from any other source. Compared to the Creator, the nations are but a speck in a bucket, and all flesh is grass—considered as nothing (40:6-8, 15; 51:12). How foolish would it be for a lump of

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<sup>110</sup> This attribution of YHWH as the creator (*ברא*) of the craftsman (*חרש*) was probably offensive to the scribe who produced the *kethib* izz, making the clause conditional—“If I create...” This “corrected” reading is only found in the MT (contra 1QIsa<sup>a</sup>, LXX, Syr., TJ) and should be rejected.

<sup>111</sup> Isaiah 41:25 describes Cyrus as trampling the clay (*טיטר*). While it may be coincidental, one may see a chain of command. YHWH → fashions → man → fashions → idols. In 41:25 YHWH → fashions → Cyrus → tramples → man → fashions → idols. Thus, YHWH not only forms the clay but forms him who controls the clay.

<sup>112</sup> Weeks rightly notes that many gods were *not* understood to be creator(s), but “divinity is to be recognized through action and effectiveness: Yahweh is not simply a better or more powerful deity because he has done things which others have not—he is the only one who can be called a deity (“Man-Made Gods? Idolatry in the Old Testament,” in *Idolatry: False Worship in the Bible, Early Judaism and Christianity* [ed. Stephen C. Barton; New York: T & T Clark, 2007], 20).

clay to presume to tell its fashioner that he has no hands (Isa 45:9)<sup>113</sup> How much more foolish would it be for those created to question the purposes of their Maker (29:16-16, 45:9-10; 64:7). Surely the One who created the eye can see (cf. Ps 94:9), and the one who made the hand can act. Indeed, the arm of him who spread out the universe is not too short to save (Isa 59:1; 50:2). The irony strikes Isaiah's hearers—only a fool would turn from the transcendent Ruler of the cosmos and expect any assistance from an entirely feeble, created person, let alone an idol that a *human* fashions.<sup>114</sup>

### 5.1.2 YHWH Helps, All Else is Helpless

Isaiah describes YHWH as incomparable since only he can provide genuine help. The question throughout most of the book is *to whom should Judah look for help?*<sup>115</sup> Rather than impractical musings, Isaiah challenges his hearers to depend on the God of Israel and nothing else, for YHWH is the only one on whom one should depend (עַשְׁׁוֹן) and trust (בְּטַח) for effective (יעַל) help (עֹזֶר).

As the one who upholds the universe, YHWH does not rely on idols for assistance (Isa 42:8). YHWH sustains (סִמְךָ) himself without any help (עֹזֶר); since no one else is able to enact his salvation, his own arm brings it about (תֹוֹשֵׁעַ, 59:16; cf. 40:10). He must go to

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<sup>113</sup> The text is difficult: *הוּא רַב אֲתִיצָרוֹ חֲרֵשׁ אֲתִחְרֵשִׁי אֲדָמָה הַיֹּאמֶר חָמֵר לִיצְרוֹ מִהִתְעַשֵּׂה וּפְעַלְקָ אַיִּזְדִּים לוֹ*, “Woe to those who contend with their maker—a pot among earthen pottery. Shall the clay say to him who forms it, ‘What are you doing?’ or [will you say] of him who made you, ‘He has no hands!’” The alteration in subject is not uncommon in Isaiah. The emended text of the NJPS and Oswalt agree (*Isaiah 40-66*, 207-209).

<sup>114</sup> Ultimately, as Baltzer says, “The manufacturers of idols want to give something form, but the result is in fact ‘formless’ [תַּהֲוָה], ‘nothingness.’ They wish to be creative, and destroy even themselves” (*Deutero-Isaiah*, 194).

<sup>115</sup> E.g., Isa 10:20, 26:3, 30:12, 31:1, 36:6, 42:8, 48:2, 50:10.

battle himself—no one's aid is necessary to assist YHWH trample the nations (63:5), his own arm suffices. Since he is self-sufficient, he can offer assistance to those in need.

Israel may, therefore, expect to find legitimate assistance through the arm of her transcendent Sovereign. YHWH alone brings Israel salvation for his name's sake (Isa 63:12-19). Moreover, God promises his servant Jacob that he will uphold and help him (יעיר 41:10), for he is the strength of his servant (49:5b). YHWH effectively (להועיל) instructs, giving guidance along the way (48:17). Isaiah's emphasis on YHWH's incomparability finds practical import for his hearers as they acknowledge that only Israel's God provides genuine help—all other sources are deficient.

Throughout the prophecy, Isaiah contrasts the assistance provided by YHWH with that of other nations or gods. Instead of leaning on YHWH (עושׁ, Isa 10:20, 50:10; cf. 30:12, 31:1), his covenant people seek support (סמך, 36:6; cf. 26:3, 48:2) and help (יעזֵר, 31:1) through other means. Isaiah, as well as Jeremiah, uses the verb **לִעְלָל** (to profit, benefit) frequently to describe the respective benefit of YHWH and any other source of help, whether gods or nations.<sup>116</sup> Ultimately, Isaiah proclaims that those who form idols (יצר-פסל) will discover that their gods do not profit (בל-יועילו, 44:9, 10).<sup>117</sup>

Isaiah ridicules the complete powerlessness of other gods compared to YHWH's self-sufficiency (Isa 59:16). A craftsman take much care to ensure his image will not move, yet he neglects to see the irony that *his idol cannot move* (41:7). Since idols have to be created and propped up onto their pedestal (40:20, 41:7), it is utter folly to expect them to turn and lift one out of distress. Indeed, the Creator of all things carries and

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<sup>116</sup> Of the 23 occurrences of the root in the Hebrew Bible Jeremiah (7) and Isaiah (8) use it more than all other sources combined.

supports (נשא/עמן) Israel (46:3-4), while weary beasts must lift and bear (נשא/עמן) the Babylonian gods Nebo and Bel (46:1-2). If man is stooped and humbled, how much more will the idols be shamed and destroyed (2:8-9, 2:18; cf. 1:20). Even if one cries to these gods, they will not help, deliver (נצל), or profit (יעל, 57:13). Therefore, Isaiah pleads with his audience to consider their foolishness—if the gods are powerless to sustain themselves, how can one expect any assistance from them?

Likewise, the prophet proclaims that one ought not to rely upon ephemeral dynasties and kingdoms for assistance. Even in the beginning of Isaiah's prophecy, he shows that YHWH undergirds the Assyrian nation for his sovereign purposes; and when his plan is accomplished, he will remove his support (10:12-14). Therefore, Israel should not lean (ען) on Assyria for assistance, for the pagan nation is but a rod in YHWH's hand (10:5). Without his support, Assyria could do nothing. Other nations are no different. Moab's cultic place (במה) will not avail (יובל, 16:12). The images (מעשֶׁה ידֵין) of Damascus provide no assurance of deliverance; indeed, for the Maker (עשותו, 17:7-8) alone can provide such help. The haughty Babylon envisons herself as the exclusive help (עוד, אני ואפסי עוד, 47:8, 10), yet she is weary (יגע) and not even her diviners can quell the disaster YHWH brings about. Furthermore, YHWH taunts Babylon to stand (עמד) in her enchantments, for *perhaps* they could assist (אולי תוכלי, 47:12; cf. 57:11-13), but they cannot even save themselves (לא-יצילו את-נפשם, 47:14).<sup>117</sup> Isaiah scoffs—“how foolish to trust in transitory kingdoms!” For YHWH is the

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<sup>117</sup> Or “Save their necks.”

true King of the cosmos, the nations rise and fall at his command.<sup>118</sup> Kingdoms will crumble, but the Creator YHWH will remain, always able to provide help.

Isaiah places chs. 36-39 in his prophecy to illustrate this same point—the King YHWH is the one upon whom Israel must rely for succor. Although Israel trusts (בְּתַחַת, 30:12, 31:1 cf. 12:2; 26:3, 4; 30:15), leans on (עַשְׁוֵה, 30:12), and seeks strength and shelter (עַזָּה) in Egypt, this will only result in shame for the covenant people (30:2-3). The Egyptians will not benefit (לֹא, 30:5) because their assistance is pointless and empty (הַבְּלֵל). Salvation may be found in YHWH (30:15), yet Israel refuses to look to him and instead seeks assistance elsewhere (30:16).

In the midst of the Assyrian siege (701 BC), the Israelites must decide whom they will trust. From the Rabshakeh's own mouth comes the question of the book *In whom do you trust?* (עַל־מִי בְּתַחַת, Isa 36:5). The root בְּתַחַת appears no less than seven times within five verses (36:4-7, 9) in order to focus on the question—"Where is Judah's trust?" Even the Rabshakeh and Sennacherib recognize that Egypt is of no help or support (סָמֵךְ בְּתַחַת, 36:6). The Assyrians are correct. No other god has been able to deliver; however, as Hezekiah acknowledges, "These were no-gods" (לֹא אֱלֹהִים אֲלֹהִים, 37:19-20). Nevertheless, the Assyrians make the faulty assumption that YHWH will be like the other gods and Israel's God will not deliver his people from the Assyrian army (36:19-20; 37:12, 18-19). As the narrative plays out, Hezekiah realizes that he can trust YHWH, since God ordained the very exaltation of Assyria (37:26). Resembling a lifeless rod, Assyria is utterly dependent on YHWH (10:5). Therefore, Assyria's boasting in her strength is like an ax gloating to the one wielding it (10:15). Hezekiah learns not to trust in other gods

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<sup>118</sup> Baltzer, *Deutero-Isaiah*, 37.

who are but the work of mortal hands (37:19), but in YHWH, the one who holds kingdoms in his hand; therefore, YHWH delivers Judah. However, Hezekiah's political maneuvering with the Babylonian Merodach-baladan demonstrates the short-lived nature of his trust (39). Scarcely has YHWH wrought his deliverance for Judah, but Hezekiah seeks assistance from the rising Babylonian empire. Thus, Isaiah's hearers are left with the question—"Whom will we trust? Shall we look YHWH, other gods, or other nations?" Isaiah beckons his audience to look to their Creator YHWH for help.

### 5.1.3 YHWH is Purposeful, All Else is Purposeless

As the incomparable, omniscient King of the universe, YHWH not only knows what will occur but he has designed it. Throughout the book of Isaiah, YHWH's plan or counsel (*עצה*) is contrasted with that of idols and other nations. Only YHWH may proclaim, "My counsel shall be established and I shall accomplish all I desire" (*עצתי תקום וככל-חפצי*) (*עֲצַתִּי תָקֹם וְכָל-חַפְצִי*, Isa 46:10). The Creator works wonderful counsel (*פָלָא עֲצֹות*, 25:1; 28:21, 29; cf. 9:5), overruling the machinations (*עצה*) of humanity (7:7-9; 8:9-10). No one can withstand YHWH's purpose; moreover, Israel's Deity relies on no one for counsel in devising his purpose (40:13-17; 41:28).<sup>119</sup> YHWH is never surprised and he does not act impetuously—he will accomplish what he has planned (55:8-11), including the election of Israel as his servant to enact that very plan (e.g., 14:1; 41:8, 9). Nonetheless, the God of Jacob has purposes not merely for Israel but for all nations. Isaiah shows that YHWH's plans are universal. The honor and dishonor of nations or cities like Tyre, for example,

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<sup>119</sup> Remarkably, Reinoud Oosting claims "The purpose of 41:28 is not that the idols are unable to answer Yhwh, but that they are not able to give him advice concerning his proclamation to Zion/Jerusalem" ("The Counsellors of the Lord in Isaiah 40-55: A Proposal to Understand their Role in the Literary Composition," *JSOT* 32 [2008]: 380). Merely five verses prior the idols are scorned for their inability to do *anything*.

derives from the eternal planning (צָרָא) of YHWH (23:8-12, 41:2-4). The haughty “ax” Assyria is no exception. This nation will be humbled after YHWH uses it to fulfill his foreordained purpose (וְהַשְׁעָנָה, 10:12; צָרָא, 14:24-27). While mighty potentates like Cyrus are unaware of YHWH, Israel’s God has ordered their kingdoms (45:5). With this knowledge of YHWH’s universal purposes, Israel may have hope, for YHWH will not abandon them in the impending exile, nor will he allow the schemes of wicked kingdoms overrule his own plan. For only YHWH’s plan will come to pass.

Any plans, then, that do not derive from YHWH will not stand. Israel’s God is unique because only he will actually accomplish what he wishes. Even YHWH’s recalcitrant children cannot confound his plan. By not submitting to YHWH’s word and plan, Judah seeks to enact his own schemes (30:10-11), which only lead to ruin (30:3), for no nation or god can annul YHWH’s purpose or turn back his hand (14:27; cf. 41:28, 43:13). What YHWH has purposed, he will do; no measure of conniving may annul it.

Moreover, YHWH taunts the idols to announce what he alone has purposed (Isa 41:23-24). After calling other gods to the courtroom, the Creator challenges the created images to take counsel together (צָרָא, 45:21) and declare the future (cf. 44:7, 46:10), yet they are unable.<sup>120</sup> Their inability to discern the future stands in contrast not only to YHWH’s foreknowledge but also his foreordination of those very plans. In fact, not only are the idols impotent to foretell the future, they can do neither good nor evil אֲלֹהִים-תְּבִינָה (alohim-tibnah).

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<sup>120</sup> Gibson misses the point when he sees in YHWH’s call to the idols the implicit “impression that for the prophet and his exiled audience in Isa 41:22ff. the other gods do very much exist...there is still an unmistakable whiff of rivalry” (*Language and Imagery*, 30, 32). They do nothing because they do not exist.

וְתַרְעֹו, 41:23). They cannot even see or understand (44:9).<sup>121</sup> Nations like Egypt as well concoct schemes with their nobles, but these designs will not succeed, for YHWH's universal plan overrides any human contrivances (Isa 19:11-15). The matchless YHWH carries out his purpose without the assistance or knowledge of anyone or anything.

#### 5.1.4 YHWH Honors, All Else Dishonors

By means of the trial speeches, YHWH honors his servants and dishonors the idols who bring disgrace to their worshippers. As we have seen above, YHWH appoints Israel to be witnesses of their God's preeminence and glory (12:1-5) and also to declare his praise (תְּהִלָּתִי, 43:21; 60:21). In response, he confirms the testimony of his servants (44:26)—YHWH alone is God. He will not allow them to be ashamed but will vindicate their witness (54:4, cf. 50:7). Indeed, no formed idol can prevail against them in a legal dispute because their vindication is guaranteed (54:17).<sup>122</sup> Israel will be honored by reflecting YHWH's matchless character (see below).

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<sup>121</sup> One finds this theme elsewhere in Scripture, biblical authors also jeer at images that are fashioned with sensory organs yet cannot perceive anything (Jer 10:1-10; Ps 115:3-8, 135:15-18). Cf. Isa 41:4, 44:6, 48:12 for the idea of God being outside of time.

<sup>122</sup> Isaiah 54:17 follows one of the final trial speeches and also contains legal language (צדקה, תורשׁיע, לשׁון). This verse may be another instance of Israel condemning the idols. First, they condemn what is formed. Given Isaiah's propensity to use 'צָרָ' to describe the work of idolatrous craftsman, it is not difficult to understand the reference of 'יְצָרָ' to be idols, especially within the greater context (44:9, 10, 12). Secondly, any reference to weaponry is foreign to the context. Every translation consulted renders the 'כָּלִי' as "weapon." However, one is hard-pressed to find contextual warrant for this gloss (cf. Ezek 16:16 where 'כָּלִי' are made into 'צְלִינִים'). Thirdly, the preposition 'לְ' is best understood as causal and not a *dativus incommodi* (i.e., "against you"), especially in light of the preceding verse. Fourthly, the next occurrence of 'צָלָח' (55:11) also describes veracity of YHWH's word (רִקְמָה). Therefore the author proposes the following translation:

הַן גֹּור יְגֹר אֲפָס מְאוֹתִי	Behold, the one showing enmity is not from me
מִרְגֵּר אֲתָךְ עַלְּךָ יַפּוֹל	Whoever contends with you shall fall <i>because</i> of you
הַנָּ[ה] אֲנָכִי בְּרָאֵתִי חֶרֶשׁ	Behold I have create the craftsman
נַפְחַ בְּאָשׁ פָּחָם וּמָצִיאַ בְּלִי לְמַעֲשָׁהּוּ	He breathes into the fire of charcoals and brings out the thing from his work

The result of the court proceedings shame the idols and demonstrate that they are worthless. YHWH disgraces the idols in no uncertain terms; they are pronounced (הַ) *to be* nothing (אַתֶּם מֵאַיִן), and *their deeds* (מְעַשָּׂה) are worthless (אַפְעַם, 41:24).<sup>123</sup> In contrast, YHWH's deeds (מְעַשָּׂה) are wonderful, as we have seen above. Here, the Creator mocks the created, do-nothing images. There is virtually no court case—the idols do not even present their arguments, for they cannot speak—much less do anything! Therefore, the images are ashamed and confounded, as are those who trust in them (41:11-12; 42:17, 45:21; cf. 65:11).

YHWH vindicates his witnesses, while the idols bring shame to their makers, whom Isaiah derides with jeers. After God promises to renew the strength of those who trust in him (חַלְפָה, 40:31), he summons the makers of idols to muster themselves with their idols (חַלְפָה, 41:6-7). YHWH also beckons the wicked to take heart in order to contend with Israel and her Defender (46:8). Yet in spite of the idolaters' efforts, their fate is

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וְאַנְכִּי בְּרָאֵתִי מִשְׁחָה לְחַבֵּל	And I create the devastator for ruin
כָּל-כָּלִי יַצֵּר עַלְיךָ לֹא יִצְלַח	Every vessel (i.e., opposing idol) formed shall not succeed <i>because of you</i>
וְכָל-לְשׁוֹן תָּקוּם אַתָּךְ לְמִשְׁפַּט תְּרַשְׁעִי	And every tongue rising with you in judgment shall be condemned
זֹאת נָחָלָת עַבְדֵי יְהוָה	This is the lot of the servants of YHWH
וְצִדְקָתָם מִאֵתִי נָאֵם יְהוָה	And their vindication is from me, declares YHWH.

<sup>123</sup> Schoors agrees, “When in the conclusion of a pericope it is stated that the gods are nothing, such can be regarded as the sentence pronounced by a judge” (*I Am God Your Saviour*, 242).

אַפְעַם is a hapax with varied textual witnesses. 1QIsa<sup>a</sup> omits the word; Targum Jonathan translates it like אַמְדָעָם, אַפְסָם, אַפְעָם (41:24, 29). אַפְסָם may have been the original reading however it seems more likely the Aramaic attempts to make sense of the infrequent verb. The LXX translators had a difficult time with both vs 24 (אַפְעַם → εκ γης [an answer to misunderstood מֵאַיִן → ποθεν, Watts, *Isaiah 34-66*, 647] and 29 and give no clear indication of the *Vorlage*. The Peshitta uses سَنَطَ which is never used to translate אַפְעַם. The word is found at Qumran parallel to אַשְׁר (e.g., 1QHa x:27; because of its occurrence in Isaiah?). Thus it is best to leave the word as understood in the MT. Barthélemy agrees: “Une correction en **מֵאַפְסָם** serait en tout cas ici inutile, sans fondement textuel et probablement erronée” (*Critique textuelle de l'Ancien Testament* (Vol. 2: Isaïe, Jérémie, Lamentations; OBO 50/1; eds. A.R. Hulst, et al.; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1986], 295).

shame and disgrace (בּוֹשׁ, כָּלֵם, פָּחֵד; 44:11; 45:16). Indeed, most of the taunts in Isa 40-55 are targeted at the makers of images. Isaiah calls them blind and dumb witnesses who are but a void (תְּהוֹ, 44:9). In the same way, every nation that relies on false gods can expect utter shame. Egypt's idols tremble as YHWH comes (19:1). Although the Egyptians seek their gods, YHWH will dry up the Nile, the pride of Egypt (19:3-10). He will consign their “no-gods” (לֹא אֱלֹהִים) to defilement and shame them through flames and annihilation (נָתַן אֶת־אֱלֹהֶיהָם בָּאֵשׁ, 37:19). Those who trust in the nations for deliverance shall be devastated (חַתֵּת) and ashamed (בּוֹשֵׁת) of their previous hope (20:5). Similarly, all who rely on idols will be abashed (בּוֹשֵׁת, 42:17; 44:9, 11; 45:16; cf. 21:9). Idolaters receive greater disgrace than the idols, for they are the ones foolish enough to hope in a work of *their* hands. The nations and their gods provide no expectation of deliverance but only derision.

#### 5.1.5 YHWH Offers Hope, All Else is Hopeless

Isaiah encourages his hearers to find their only hope in YHWH. Israel's God enacts the curses outlined in the covenant but not without feeling pain or remorse for his people (Isa 30:15, 18; 63:9; 65:1-2). He does not mete out his retribution rashly; instead, his vengeance displays his justice and ultimately refines Israel's dross and alloy (סִיגּוּ...בְּדִיל, 1:25). YHWH's people receive their just due. Nevertheless, there is hope, since this punishment is commensurate with the crime (40:2). Rather than being subject to a capricious, foreign monarch, who seeks only to subjugate more territory, the exile and all of its ramifications come from a purposing, foreordaining God. Israel has no reason to complain that YHWH is unaware or unwilling to assist in their difficulty (40:27-28),

49:14-20), for unlike the idols, he is the omniscient Creator, who cares for his people.

From the beginning of the book, Isaiah proclaims that the land will be laid waste, (1:7) but there is hope for the future when the inhabitants of that land will be called “the City of Righteousness,” “a Faithful Town” (1:26). Since YHWH is enthroned as king throughout even the most tumultuous times (6:1), Israel may find solace in the midst of calamity because a greater purpose exists—YHWH has a plan.

Idols and idolaters are no source of help because can do nothing, for they *are nothing*. Isaiah uses the words אָפָּס and אין to describe the worthlessness of everyone and everything compared to YHWH (see below). Those who quarrel (רִיב/צָוָה) with the seed of Abraham will perish (אָבֹד) and become אין and אָפָּס (Isa 41:11). The adverb אין occurs nine times within Isa 41, five times within vs. 26 and 28.<sup>124</sup> Isaiah uses this term and the similar אָפָּס to emphasize the sheer lack of rival to YHWH, for he alone declares the future. No one (אין) declares (מִנְגַּד) or makes YHWH’s plan heard (מִשְׁמִיעַ, 41:26b). Thus, every idol or idolater who sets him or herself with or against YHWH is worthless. Isaiah 41:29 calls any who would attempt to do such אין, for their own accomplishments (מִעְשָׁה) are nothing (אָפָּס), and their images are a breath (רוּחַ)—utter emptiness (תְּהוֹ).<sup>125</sup> Isaiah sees the idols, their works, and their worshippers and declares that they are nothingness.

<sup>124</sup> This word occurs more in Isaiah than any other biblical book (92x out of 686; 38 of these within Isa 40-48).

<sup>125</sup> The Masorites accented the four adjectives to come in pairs: הִנֵּה כָלֵם אֵין אָפָּס מַעֲשֵׂהֶם רֹוחַ וְתַהוּ נְסִכִּים, “Behold all of them, a nothing-delusion are their works; an empty wind are their images.” Thus רֹוחַ וְתַהוּ is understood as a hendiadys (cf. WHS §72).

Cf. Hezekiah’s prayer where he describes the other nations’ gods as no gods (חָמָה לֹא אֱלֹהִים) but the works of human’s hands therefore those nations perished (Isa 37:19). In contrast to the idols who produce nothing, humanity is YHWH’s handiwork (Isa 29:16, 23; 64:7).

While it is difficult to prove, one *may* see a secondary polemic leveled against Marduk or Ea/Enki, who in the eighth-to seventh-centuries was gaining ascendancy in both Assyria and Babylon (T. Abusch, “Marduk,” in *Dictionary of Deities and Demons in the Bible* [Leiden: Brill, 1999], 546). As Marduk came

Isaiah's intransigent stance stems from a concern for Israel to hope and trust in YHWH for assistance. The prophet desires his audience to seek YHWH for practical support. “[T]he main idea” of “confessional” descriptions of YHWH’s incomparability, says Labuschagne, “is that there is no one like Him in whom man in distress can put his trust, for there is none like Him able to help in a struggle.”<sup>126</sup> Throughout the entire Hebrew Bible, YHWH’s uniqueness coincides with his exclusivity and immanence, both flowing from his matchless character. Labuschagne sums up YHWH’s uniqueness compared to idols:

Those gods, unlike Yahweh, cannot redeem; they cannot rescue nor render assistance to those involved in an unequal struggle; they are unable to do justice; they are not rock; they do not hear when there is a call for help; they are not living gods; they have not proved mighty in battle; they have not attempted to go and take a nation for themselves; they are unable to work miracles; they cannot actively carry a nation, but have to be carried; they neither command, nor decide, nor know the future; they are never 'single'; they are no-gods, futilities and, being the work of human hands, totally insignificant.<sup>127</sup>

YHWH alone is the one who creates, helps, purposes, honors, and offers hope; compared to him, all else is nothing.

## 5.2 We Become What We Worship

Throughout the Bible, numerous passages describe how worshippers reflect the object of their adoration. On the basis of these texts, G.K Beale has argued extensively that one

<sup>126</sup> Labuschagne, *The Incomparability*, 87.

<sup>127</sup> *Ibid.*, 148.

may conclude, “What people revere, they resemble, either for ruin or restoration.”<sup>128</sup>

Oftentimes, Beale argues, biblical descriptions of “sensory organ malfunction” relate to a “retributive taunt” against idolatry in and outside of the community of Israel.<sup>129</sup> We will find that this thinking is also prevalent in Isaiah, who jeers both idol and idolater while he magnifies YHWH and his worshippers.

Even from the beginning of his prophecy, Isaiah warns idolaters that they will reflect what they worship. The prophet cautions that those who worship a terebinth (אֵל) or gardens (גַּן) shall be like the same (...וּכְתַּחַי בְּ...). They shall resemble a terebinth *along with* its withered leaves. They will image their choice gardens, and they shall be waterless (Isa 1:30).<sup>130</sup> Similarly, YHWH commands Isaiah to make his audience like the idols they worship—completely imperceptible (6:9-10).<sup>131</sup> Other descriptions of the idolaters’ idol-like blindness and imperceptibility are pervasive in Isaiah. Those who make images have no understanding (44:18-19) and deceive themselves (44:20). However, this imperceptibility is not limited to foreign nations. Like dumb dogs, Israel’s leaders also do not know anything (56:10-11, cf. 29:9-11). Therefore, YHWH punishes

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<sup>128</sup> *We Become What We Worship: A Biblical Theology of Idolatry* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2008), 16. Beale’s works on the topic include *A New Testament Biblical Theology: The Unfolding of the Old Testament in the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2011), 357-468; *The Temple and the Church’s Mission: A Biblical Theology of the Dwelling Place of God* (NSBT 17; ed. D.A.Carson; Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press, 2004), 81-122; and “Isaiah VI 9-23: A Retributive Taunt Against Idolatry” *VT* 41 (1991): 258-78. Obviously Beale works from a Christian perspective and includes both the Hebrew Bible and NT in his analysis. An analysis into the NT theology surrounding Beale’s thesis is beyond the scope of the present work.

<sup>129</sup> “Isaiah VI 9-23: A Retributive Taunt,” 273.

<sup>130</sup> The author arrived at the interpretive conclusion independently and was subsequently confirmed by Beale, *We Become What We Worship*, 52-54. Beale takes this thought further by claiming that several references to stump imply destroyed idols, who are subsequently burned (e.g., Isa 1:31, 6:13; *ibid.*, 52-63).

<sup>131</sup> Beale’s own thesis was derived from this passage (*We Become What We Worship*, 11; cf. Beale, “Isaiah VI 9-13: A Retributive Taunt Against Idolatry,” 257-78).

his people, for they are as blind as their idols (42:17-25; 49:10).<sup>132</sup> These taunts function “to indicate mockingly that the worshiper, rather than experiencing an expected life-giving blessing, has received a curse by becoming as spiritually inanimate, empty, rebellious or shameful as the idol is depicted to be.”<sup>133</sup> The idolaters take the form of their image. All those who form idols (Isa יִצְרַר־פְּסָל בָּלָם) are empty (תָּהוּ); although they serve as witnesses of their gods, they are imperceptible (44:9). They do not know (יִדְעֻן) or understand (יִבְינוּ), for their eyes are smeared like their gods.<sup>134</sup> Thus, YHWH declares (הִנֵּה) that they will be confounded and terrified (44:11). Those who worship insignificant things will become similarly insignificant.

On the other hand, those who worship YHWH reflect his image; they rightly perceive and act righteously. The entire testimony of Scripture shows that YHWH created man in his image to spread his universal theocratic kingdom.<sup>135</sup> However, man

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<sup>132</sup> For greater discussion on this topic see also Edward P. Meadors, *Idolatry and the Hardening of the Heart: A Study in Biblical Theology* (New York: T&T Clark, 2006). One also finds similar aspersions in Ps 115:3-9 and Ps 135:15-18 where the worshipper reflects his god.

<sup>133</sup> *We Become What We Worship*, 21.

<sup>134</sup> Two interesting observations may be made about the verb תָּהַט. First, Isaiah may once again ridicule idolaters by comparing them to their images. The infrequent verb תָּהַט as well as its bi-form תָּהַט (see below) may have been used to describe the creation of idols. Authors typically use other verbs to describe the creation of idols (e.g., צָרַף, נָסַךְ). Isaiah describes part of the creation of the image as *overlaying* it with gold and silver (40:19). Elsewhere the verb תָּהַט usually denotes plastering (e.g., Lev 14:42), yet 1 Chr 29:4 uses the verb תָּהַט to describe overlaying the walls of the temple *with gold and silver*. Thus the idols’ witnesses have equally “overlaid” eyes—both are imperceptive.

Secondly, the verb תָּהַט is usually pointed as a bi-consonantal תָּהַט, additionally the subject and verb do not agree (כִּי יִתְהַט...תָּהַט). This is usually understood as an alternate form of the geminate. Although unattested in the witnesses, an initial *yod* may have been lost through haplography rendering the original כִּי יִתְהַט. Thus YHWH may be the agent who smears their eyes (ESV agrees, cf. 6:10; 29:10). Deirdre Dempsey takes this to be the *idols* who are imperceptible; while this is true, the context before and after describes the idols makers (“Verb Syntax of Isaiah 44:9-20,” in *Imagery And Imagination In Biblical Literature, Essays in Honor of Aloysius Fitzgerald. F.S.C.* [ed. Lawrence Boadt and Mark S. Smith; CBQMS 32; Washington, DC: Catholic Biblical Association of America, 2001], 148).

<sup>135</sup> Meredith G. Kline, *Kingdom Prologue: Genesis Foundations for a Covenantal Worldview* (Overland Park, KS: Two Age Press, 2000), 42-61. Herein lays another biblical-theological discussion beyond the

sinned, fell, and subsequently marred his image of God. Therefore, YHWH purposes to establish his theocratic kingdom once again by conforming the Davidic king to YHWH's image and empowering him through the Spirit of YHWH in order that the rule of the Creator's representative be established in righteousness, justice, and equity (Isa 9:5-6, 11:1-10). As YHWH's kingdom expands and people turn to serve and worship him, YHWH's image-bearers shall be restored—no longer shall they receive the “anesthetizing”<sup>136</sup> effects of their idolatry. For when the Davidic ruler takes the throne, the eyes of the blind shall see (29:18-21, 32:3-5, 35:6), and those who turn to YHWH, regarding him as their King, shall not be “sick” but forgiven of their iniquity (נַעֲשֶׂה, 33:24).<sup>137</sup> Thus, those who so dimly reflect YHWH will once again radiate his glory. Even foreigners who attach themselves to YHWH shall experience similar glorification (56:3). Therefore, we see that those who worship and honor YHWH shall reflect his image to their glory—no more shall they mirror blind and imperceptive gods.<sup>138</sup>

Furthermore, those who worship YHWH reflect his righteous character. YHWH shall make those who serve him righteous (צדקה) and grant his people strength (עֲزֹז), justification (יכזק), and glory (תְהִלָּה), 45:24-25). Indeed, their raiment shall be Salvation (61:10-11).<sup>139</sup> YHWH will place in Zion his salvation and glory (תְשׁוּעָתִי...תְפָאָרָתִי,

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nature of the present work. For more discussion on the original role for humanity's dominion see *ibid.*, as well as Beale, *The Temple and Church's Mission*.

<sup>136</sup> Beale, *We Become What We Worship*, 268-69

<sup>137</sup> More often than not, Isaiah's reference to sickness involves *spiritual* ailment (cf. 1:6, 30:26, 53:5).

<sup>138</sup> A thorough investigation of the *imago Dei* is beyond the scope of this thesis. Suffice it to say, humankind was created to image YHWH but through the fall his image was marred but may be restored through conforming to Christ—the exact image of YHWH (cf. Col 1:15). For a thorough discussion see Beale, *We Become What We Worship*, 268-283; Kline, *Kingdom Prologue*, 62-90; Niehaus, *Ancient Near Eastern Themes*, 83-115. McKenzie rightly claims that Isaiah deliberately reverses Gen 1:26-27, “God made man in his image and likeness, and now deluded man makes God in his image” (*Second Isaiah*, 68).

46:13), and his people Israel shall *be* glorious (60:19, 62:2). Given a new name, the redeemed community shall be a crown in the hand of YHWH (62:3-4; cf. 28:1). Isaiah shows that the idolatrous reflect their gods to their shame, while those who worship YHWH reflect him to their glory and vindication.

### 5.3 Summary

Isaiah demonstrates that the Creator YHWH helps, enacts his purposes, honors, and offers hope. Meanwhile, the idols and those who worship them are created, helpless, have uncertain plans, bring dishonor, and offer no hope—they are nothing compared to YHWH. Isaiah starkly contrasts every other god or nation to whom one may look for help with YHWH:

<b>YHWH</b>	<b>All Else</b>
Creator	Created
Purposeful	Purposeless
Helps	Helpless
Honors	Dishonors
Offers Hope	Hopeless
Existentially Present	Existentially Absent
Ontologically Ultimate <sup>139</sup>	Ontologically Nothing

Isaiah provokes his hearers to consider the source of their hope and trust, and he urges them to look to the incomparable YHWH. Throughout the entire Hebrew Bible, YHWH’s incomparability is connected with “the fact that *He intervenes in history as the*

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<sup>139</sup> Space does not permit an inquiry into the current discussion of imputed righteousness. For a compelling discussion within the concept in Isaiah see Thomas D. Petter, “The Meaning of Substitutionary Righteousness in Isa 53:11: A Summary of the Evidence” *TrinJ* 32 (2011):165-189.

<sup>140</sup> Obviously this statement requires some unpacking. Perhaps the NT supplies the best illustration. In his letters, Paul describes *Christ* as “ultimate.” Christ fills “all in all” (α πάντα ἐν πᾶσιν πληρουμένου, Eph 1:23). Moreover, the compounded confessions in Col 1 portray Christ as the ultimate source and goal of all things. Elsewhere, the apostle calls the father “all in all” (πάντα ἐν πᾶσιν, 1 Cor 15:28).

*redeeming God.”<sup>141</sup>* For this reason, Isaiah emphasizes YHWH’s uniqueness in order to demonstrate that Israel’s God is a reliable source of help and hope, for YHWH is the only god who is existentially immanent. Meanwhile, the idols contribute nothing to YHWH’s plan; not only are they ignorant of his purpose, but they can do nothing. Those who praise YHWH shall reflect his glory, whereas those who esteem worthless images become like their object of worship—*nothing*.

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<sup>141</sup> Labuschagne, *The Incomparability*, 90-91; emphasis original.

## 6. אָפָּס IN ISAIAH 45:22

In this chapter we will apply the previous lexical and literary analysis to Isaiah 45:22, and we will see that the phrase אָפָּס אֶרְצָן in Isa 45:22 not only denotes the idiomatic, geographic phrase “ends of the earth” but also the context specific “nothings” of the earth. This is further demonstrated by recognizing Isaiah’s dependence on the theology and vocabulary of Deut, especially Deut 32-33. The prophet uses אָפָּס as a derogatory appellation to beckon the nothing-like idolaters to turn to YHWH for salvation. We will first see how Isaiah describes the idols, idolaters, and idolatrous Israelites as אָפָּס.

### 6.1 Idols as אָפָּס

At the end of the first major trial speech (Isa 41), YHWH pronounces the verdict—idols are nothing. As we have seen above, Isaiah introduces the conclusion of several of his legal disputes with the idols with the pronouncement הֵן. Several of these verdicts ultimately describe YHWH’s adversaries as אָפָּס or גְּזָבָן. Consider 41:24, 26b, 28-29:

הַזָּהָתֶם מֵאֶז וְפָעַלְכֶם מֵאֶפֶע תוּבָה יִבְחַר בְּכֶם	The verdict: you are less than <b>nothing</b> and your work is less than <b>worthlessness</b> the [one] choosing you is an abomination
...	...
מִיְהָגִיד מֶרֶאַשׁ וְנִדְעָה וּמַלְפְּנִים וְנוֹאָמֵר צְדִיק	Who declared it from long ago that we might consider [him]? even beforehand that we might say he is right?
...	...
אַף אֵין-מְגִיד אַף אֵין מְשִׁמְעָה אַף אֵין-שָׁמַע אָמְרִיכֶם... וְאָרָא וְאֵין אִישׁ וּמְאָלָה וְאֵין יוּעַץ וְאָשָׁאָלָם וַיְשִׁיבוּ דָבָר הַנּוֹ כָּלָם אַפְסָ <אֵין> <sup>142</sup> מְעַשֵּׂהֶם רוּחַ וְתַהֲוּ נְסִכָּהֶם	Indeed there is <b>none</b> declaring Indeed there is <b>none</b> making it heard Indeed there is <b>none</b> hearing your words And I considered and there was <b>no one</b> even among these <b>there is no</b> counselor [No one] that if I ask they might reply The verdict of all of them <b>Nothing, naught</b> are their works An <b>empty breath</b> are their statues <sup>143</sup>

In this passage, YHWH provokes the idols to declare the future to prove that they are gods (וְנִדְעָה כִּי אֱלֹהִים אַתָּם 41:23), yet they remain dumb with no reply or no defense — they do nothing.

The prophet taunts the images by calling them **אַפְס**. We have seen that YHWH's deeds (מְעַשִּׂים) include the creation of humanity and the cosmos, whereas the images *do* absolutely nothing (אַפְס or אֵין אַפְס), much less create anything. Rather than possessing spirit (רוּח) and giving substance or order to the empty cosmos (תַּהְוָה, Gen 1:2), *idols themselves are* an empty breath (רוּח וְתַהֲוָה, 41:29). Isaiah uses the term **אַפְס** to ridicule them and describe the utter void without YHWH: there is nothing besides YHWH (אַפְס בְּלֹעֵדִי),

<sup>142</sup> הַנּוֹ, “a disaster,” according to the MT, 1QIsa<sup>a</sup>, Syr., and TJ all read this as הַנּוֹ which would bring it in line with the preceding verses. The letters ה and נ are easily confused and may have been confused in MT. Although the Syr. and TJ translate both הַנּוֹ and הַנּוֹ with similar glosses, הַנּוֹ does not fit as well in the context (so also Watts, *Isaiah*, 647; contra Baltzer, *Deutero-Isaiah*, 122).

<sup>143</sup> The NJPS translation says it well: “See, they are all nothingness, Their works are nullity, Their statues are naught and nil” (41:29).

45:6), nothing like him (אֵלֶּה כְּמַנִּי 46:9, אֵלֶּה כְּמַנִּי 45:14). Only YHWH is a source of hope and help while the idols *accomplish* nothing and *are* nothing.

## 6.2 Idolaters as אֱפָס

Previously, we considered how idolaters resemble the gods they worship and ultimately make themselves אֱפָסִים as well. Once again, YHWH's verdict in several disputes, introduced by הֵן, declares that the nations are nothing, just like their gods.

Isaiah uses the dispute form in ch. 40 to magnify YHWH and proclaim that the nations are אֱפָס. The conflict begins with an interrogation (מַי...מַי...אַתֶּם, Isa 40:12-31) and concludes in 40:15-17. All creation is like dust, a cloud, and fine dust before YHWH. Everything is considered a small thing before YHWH. Verse 17 concludes:

<b>כָּל־הָגּוּם כִּי־אֵין גָּדוֹ</b> <b>מִאֱפָס וּמִתְהָוָה</b> <b>נְחַשְׁבּוּ־לָוּ</b>	All the nations are like naught before him less than nothing <sup>144</sup> and emptiness are they considered to him <sup>145</sup>
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Isaiah calls the idolatrous nations (גּוֹיִם) nothing, like their gods.<sup>146</sup>

<sup>144</sup> 1QIsa<sup>a</sup>, the Syrohexapla and Vg. read, בְּאֱפָס, connecting the synonymous lines closer. Yet this seems to be an attempt to draw the synonymous lines closer with the comparative preposition.

<sup>145</sup> So also Sirach 41:10,

<b>כָּל מִאֱפָס אֵל אֱפָס יִשּׁוֹב</b> <b>כִּי חָנָף מִתְהָוָה אֵל תָּהָוָה</b>	All from naught will return to naught So the godless from emptiness to emptiness.
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(Pancratius C. Beentjes, *The Book of Ben Sira in Hebrew: A Text Edition of All Extant Hebrew Manuscripts and A Synopsis of All Parallel Hebrew Ben Sira Texts* [VT Sup Vol LXVIII; Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1997]: 72).

<sup>146</sup> While גּוֹיִם may designate all humanity, Isaiah usually uses גּוֹיִם for non-Israelites. Moreover, vs. 17 is followed by another round of questions (מַי...מַי...וּמַה, 40:18) explicitly related to idols (וּמַה, 40:18). **וְאֶל־מַיְתָּהָוָן אֵל וְמַה** (40:18).

Of the 72 occurrences of גּוֹיִם in Isaiah, the author found only five instances where it is unambiguously attributed to Israel, two of which have negative connotations (e.g., הֵן, 1:4; cf. 10:6), the other three simply refer to the nation of Israel (9:2, 26:15; 66:8). Moreover, Isaiah uses the plural in 40:17, which obviously does not designate Israel unambiguously. Additionally, the prophet refers to Israel as a גּוֹי only once in the second half of the book; indeed, Isaiah features the גּוֹיִם in his polemic (43:9). Although Isaiah uses cosmic language to compare everything with YHWH, this dispute form functions to encourage Israel who was trodden by nations. Isaiah will also mention idols explicitly (see below).

Isaiah also calls Israel's adversaries in Isa 41:11. YHWH proclaims the verdict (הַ): those contending (אָנָשִׁי רַיבָּךְ) with Israel will be ashamed and abashed; they shall be *like nothing* and perish (כָּאֵין וַיָּאֶבְדֹּו). The legal decision (הַ) rules in favor of Jacob, for YHWH helps (עוֹרָךְ) him (50:9; cf. 54:15-16). Who (מִ) can condemn? None. Everyone contending with Israel will wear out, as if a moth consumes them (יַאֲכִלָּם, 50:9; cf. 54:17). All who dispute with YHWH's people are like אין or אָפָס.

Isaiah 34:12 also describes the recipients of YHWH's universal reckoning as אָפָס. In order to vindicate Zion (לְרִיב צִיּוֹן, 34:8), YHWH will lay waste the earth. Therefore, the land shall be called (יִקְרָאֵו) “There is No Monarchy There” (אֵין שֵׁם מֶלֶכְוֹת).<sup>147</sup> All of its officials shall be (יִהְיוּ) “Nothing” (אָפָס, cf. 40:23, אָפָס). The use of אָפָס as a name or title should not surprise us, since we have already seen that the Phoenician and Akkadian cognates of אָפָס are used to describe an individual. Additionally, Yahwistic prophets commonly use names for judgment or consolation (e.g., Hos 1:3, 8; 2:1-3). Isaiah also gives new (Isa 1:26; 7:3, 14; 8:1; 19:18; 30:7; 48:2; 48:8; 58:12; 60:14, 18; 61:3; 62:2, 4, 12; cf. 9:6, 45:3-4; 47:5; 49:1; 65:1, 15) or “pet names” for a rhetorical purpose.<sup>148</sup> In this way, Isaiah names the princes אָפָס in Isa 34:21.

The prophet ridicules the false gods and their worshippers—they are אין, תְּהִוָּה אֵין, and אָפָס. One finds comparable mockery elsewhere. Jeremiah describes both idols and their worshippers as foolish and worthless in light of the Creator YHWH. Jer 10:14-16 reads:

“Every man is *stupid* and *without knowledge* (מִדְעַת); every **goldsmith** is *put to shame* by his **idols** (פָּסָל), for **his images** are *false* (שְׁקָר נָסְכָו), and there is *no breath* (רוֹחַ) in them. They are *worthless* (הַבְּלָה), a work of *delusion* (חַעֲתָעִים); at the time of their punishment *they shall perish* (יַאֲבֹדוּ). Not like these is he who is

<sup>147</sup> The NRSV rightly sees this as a prophetic naming and capitalizes “No Kingdom There.”

<sup>148</sup> Some “pet names” include, יְשֻׁרְׁן, Isa 44:2; יְהָבָב, 30:7, 51:9; cf. יְשֻׁשָׁנָה, Jer 51:41.

**the portion** of Jacob, for he is the **one who formed** (יִצְחַר) all things, and Israel is the tribe of his inheritance; **the LORD of hosts** is his name (יְהוָה צְבָאֹת שְׁמוֹ)“ (ESV; Jer 10:14-16 = Jer 51:17-19; cf. Hab 2:18-20).

Those who trust in idols are like the idols they worship: hopeless, helpless, and accounted as nothing.

### 6.3 Israelites as אֱפָס

An Israelite who serves idols is no different than other idolaters—they also are אֱפָס. Like the sightless idols and the idolaters who resemble them, idolatrous Israel is blind. On the heels of describing the shame in store for idolaters (42:17), YHWH declares how his servant (עֲבָדִי) is blind (עֹוֶר) and deaf (חָרְשָׁה, 42:18-19; cf. 43:8). Although they are rebellious and obstinate (30:1), YHWH promises to restore his people to the task to which they were called.

Previously, we considered how YHWH addresses other nations in his polemics; however, each of these disputes functions as a warning *for Israel* to avoid similar condemnation. For example, Isa 40 records YHWH’s dispute with the nations, but it concludes by addressing Israel directly (40:27-31). Scheuer understands Israel to be the addressee of each idol-fabrication text. Israel, he claims, is the one with whom YHWH disputes—God’s people are the idol manufacturers.<sup>149</sup> While Scheuer overstates his case (see above), he nonetheless raises a valid point—Israelites are by no means guiltless in regards to idolatry. It is difficult to distinguish between which specific type of idolater is intended in several passages, be it one of the nations or an Israelite. This ambiguity may be intentional. *Anyone* who worships a no-god becomes a no-thing; therefore, Israel should take heed and cease practicing idolatry—the very reason they are blind and deaf.

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<sup>149</sup> *The Return of YHWH*, 82-104.

However, as we have seen above, YHWH promises to restore his broken people. He will anoint his Servant to accomplish his task (42:1). This David-like Servant will bear their sins completely and fulfill the covenant stipulations (52:13-53:-12); then Israel will perceive rightly (32:3-5; 35:6). At that time Israel will be a light to the nations (49:6), who shall behold God's people's righteousness (61:11).

Thus far, we have noted that YHWH enters into disputes with other gods and their worshippers to demonstrate that they are **םְנַמְּנָה**. Moreover, Isaiah names idols, idolaters, and idolatrous Israelites **םְנַמְּנָה**—they are nothing. We will see below that in Isa 45:22, YHWH will beckon those **םְנַמְּנָה**-idolaters to turn and submit to his sovereignty for their deliverance; however, we will first consider Isaiah's dependence on Deuteronomy and how this informs his polemics against idolatry.

#### **6.4 Isaiah's Use of Deuteronomy 32-33**

Isaiah 45 continues the prophet's defense of monotheism—a theology by no means found only in Isaiah. YHWH's exclusivity and the idols' non-existence are described in numerous passages throughout the Hebrew Bible and definitively expressed at Sinai.<sup>150</sup> Nevertheless, Isaiah appears to depend heavily on the monotheistic claims in the fifth book of the Pentateuch and echoes much of its theology and phraseology, particularly of the covenant lawsuit in Deut 32-33.<sup>151</sup>

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<sup>150</sup> The author acknowledges that the understanding of this issue is disputed in biblical studies. This thesis understands monotheism to have been progressively revealed to the patriarchs and unambiguously explained on Sinai. However, a satisfying defense of this stance is well beyond the parameters of the current study.

<sup>151</sup> An extensive study into the provenience of Deut 32 is beyond the scope of this paper. The author holds the traditional understanding of Mosaic authorship. Many assume that since Deuteronomy “appears too heavily influenced by the prophetic movement,” it must be dated late (Wright, “The Lawsuit of God: A Form-Critical Study of Deuteronomy 32,” in *Israel’s Prophetic Heritage: Essays in Honor of James*

The book of Isaiah commences by calling upon the cosmos as witness against Israel in a *rīb*, which is based on the Covenant lawsuit on the plains of Moab. Consider the verbal affinity in Deut 32:1 and Isa 1:2:

Deut 32:1	Isaiah 1:2
<u>האוֹנֵן הַשְׁמִים וְאֶדְבָּרָה</u>	<u>שָׁמְעוּ שְׁמִים</u>
<u>וְהַזְּעִינֵי אָרֶץ כִּי יְהוָה דָּבָר</u>	<u>וְתִשְׁמַע אָרֶץ</u>
<u>אָמָרִי-פִּי:</u>	

Isaiah 1:2 and Deuteronomy 32:1 *alone* share these four highlighted words (אָזֶן/שְׁמִים/שָׁמֵעַ/אָרֶץ).<sup>152</sup> From the very start, Isaiah demonstrates that his prophecy is informed by and based on the Covenant at Sinai that Moses recapitulated in Deuteronomy.

Isaiah utilizes certain titles and concepts found only or predominately in Deuteronomy to show that not only does his prophecy demonstrate continuity, but also that Deuteronomy is the foundation for his dispute with Israel. For example, one finds the name Jeshurun (ישׁוּרֹן) ascribed to Israel only in Deut 32:33 and Isaiah 44 (Deut 32:15; 33:5, 26; Isa 44:2); moreover, the appellation is in connection to YHWH's exclusivity and special election of Israel. In Deuteronomy, this name is placed in a context describing how Israel angers YHWH with their foreign, abominable gods (חוּבָת וָרִים). Another example of verbal affinity is the reference to YHWH's care as that of an eagle (נְשָׁר, Deut 32:11//Isa 40:31; cf. Exod 19:4, Deut 28:49; Ps 103:5). Those who forsake YHWH and violate the covenant (Deut 32:15) are compared to Sodom and Gomorrah (Deut 32:32// Isa 1:10). Deuteronomy's theology and even vocabulary have shaped Isaiah's own theology and may be seen flowing from the prophet's words.

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*Muilenburg* [ed. Bernhard W. Anderson and Walter Harrelson; New York: Harper and Brothers, 1962], 26). However, the very opposite could be proposed.

<sup>152</sup> Jeremiah uses similar language but only calls to the land (אָרֶץ, 6:19; 22:29).

Another shared image is YHWH's designation as "Rock" (צָוָר), which is also predominately located in Isaiah and Deut 32, once again in the context of YHWH's exclusivity.<sup>153</sup> Isaiah associates YHWH's rock-likeness to his salvation (עֲשֵׂה, Isa 17:10), strength (עַזָּה, 17:10; cf. 8:14), eternity (עוֹלָמִים, 26:4), incomparability (44:8), and righteousness (צָדָקָה, 51:1). In Isa 51:1, Israel is called to consider the צָוָר from which they were taken; likewise, Deut 32:18 recounts how the צָוָר begot them (יְלִדָּה). Even the reference to YHWH's provision of water from the rock (Deut 32:13) has a parallel in Isa 48:21. Isaiah's prophecy abounds in parallels to Deuteronomy.

Although his people dwell in a desert region (אֶרֶץ מָדָבָר, Deut 32:10), YHWH has taken and fashioned his chosen Israel to inhabit the land. Both Isaiah and Deut 32 describe YHWH as the one who acquired, created, and established Israel (קָנָה/עָשָׂה/כָּזֵן), Deut 32:6). This creation of a people was for the purpose of settling (לִשְׁבַּת, Isa 45:18) the land, so that it would not remain desolate (תְּהִוֵּה, Deut 32:10//Isa 45:18). Moses describes YHWH's election of Israel in Deuteronomy with the term בָּחָר—the very term Isaiah then uses almost as an appellation for God's people (אתה יִשְׂרָאֵל עֲבָדִי יַעֲקֹב אֶשְׁר בָּחָרְתִּיךְ Isa 41:8).<sup>154</sup> Isaiah's alteration of themes or terms is almost more telling than verbatim quotations. Whereas Moses tells the covenant community that they are to be a holy people (עם קָדוֹשׁ, Deut 4:6; 14:2, 21; 26:19; 28:9), Isaiah begins his prophecy by

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<sup>153</sup> Of the eight occurrences of צָוָר in Deuteronomy, seven are in Deut 32. One time, צָוָר refers to the rock out of which YHWH fed the people (v. 13). Every other reference understands YHWH or a parody (v. 37) to be the Rock (4, 15, 18, 30, 31). Outside of the Psalms (24x), צָוָר occurs the most in Isaiah (12x) and Deuteronomy (9x). This appellation is also found at Qumran (e.g., 4Q377 f2ii:7; 4Q504 f1–2rv:19).

<sup>154</sup> E.g., Deut 4:37; Deut 7:6, 7; 10:15; 12:5; 14:2//Isa 41:8, 8; 43:10; 44:1, 2. Moreover, בָּחָר occurs most in Deuteronomy (31) followed by Isaiah (20).

describing Israel as a people laden with sin (*עַמּוֹת בְּדַעַת*, Isa 1:4)—they are people of Gomorrah (*עַמּוֹת עַמְרָה*, Isa 1:10)—who have sinned against the *Holy One* of Israel (*קָדוֹשׁ יִשְׂרָאֵל*, e.g., Isa 1:4; 10:20; 29:19; 41:14). Isaiah then proclaims that one day the congregation will once again be called a holy people (*וּקְרָאוּ לָהֶם עַם־הַקָּדֵשׁ*, Isa 62:12). While the community may be ignorant of the Law, Isaiah cannot help but speak in the terms influenced by the Torah.

The themes of YHWH's uniqueness and incomparability, as well as many of the other motifs that we have traced above in Isaiah, flow from the theology of Deuteronomy, especially the lawsuit of Deut 32-33. Isaiah understands from Deuteronomy that YHWH alone raises kings and kingdoms; the Sovereign of the universe will not share his glory with anyone. For this reason YHWH restrains his anger lest he destroy Israel with the result that other nations claim that their hands have prevailed (*יָדָנוֹ רָמָה*) and that YHWH himself *did not* accomplish it (*וְלֹא יְהוָה פָּעַל בְּלִזְאת*, Deut 32:27). Indeed, Isaiah says it is *YHWH* who raises Cyrus up (Isa 41:1-3). Who *does* this (*מִי פָּעַל וַעֲשָׂה*, 41:4a)? It is YHWH, *אָנָּנוּ יְהוָה* (41:4b). As we have seen above, Isaiah describes YHWH's present and future plans as inscrutable. Likewise, Moses says that other nations have no counsel (*עֵצָה*) or understanding (*תְּבוּנָה*, Deut 32:28), nor can they perceive their own future (*אֲחֶרְיתָם*, Deut 32:29). YHWH is the one who upholds his people and exalts and debases rulers of empires according to his purposes, whether Egyptian, Assyrian, Babylonia, or Persian.

Deuteronomy 32-33 also demonstrates YHWH's complete uniqueness by declaring that no other god compares. Moses maintains that other gods (*אֱלֹהִים*), or false rocks (*צָוָר*), to which people flee cannot assist (*צָוָר*, Deut 32:37-38) because there is no

god but YHWH. YHWH alone (בָּדָד) led the people; there was no foreign god with him (וְאֵין בְּכֶם זֶה, Isa 43:12), for Jeshurun's God has no equal (אֵין כָּלֵל יִשְׁרָאֵל, Deut 33:26).<sup>155</sup> Additionally, ch. 32 contains YHWH's emphatic self-declaration: אני אני הוא ואין אללים עמדי (Deut 32:39). One also notices this emphatic repetition in Isaiah.<sup>156</sup> Indeed, two contiguous first person pronouns (אני אני) occur only three times in the Hebrew Bible (Deut 32:39, Isa 48:15, Hos 5:16); the respective passages in Deuteronomy and Isaiah both come from the mouth of YHWH. Similarly, YHWH also speaks using אני אני three times in the Hebrew Bible—all within this section of Isaiah (Isa 43:11, 25; 51:12).<sup>157</sup> Consider also the similar language describing YHWH's uniqueness:

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<sup>155</sup> See Appendix I.

<sup>156</sup> A repeated word, let alone a pronoun, is certainly suspect to dittography. However, the similarity in contexts demonstrates this echo as well as the relative obscurity of this repetition.

<sup>157</sup> Schorch notes Isaiah's penchant for repeating the same word for “emphasis” (cf. 21:9; 26:3, 15; 38:19; 40:1; 48:11; 51:9, 17; 52:1, 11; 57:14, 19; 58:2; 62:10; “Between Science and Magic: The Function and Roots of the Paronomasia in the Prophetic Books of the Hebrew Bible” in *Puns and Pundits: Word Play in the Hebrew Bible and Ancient Near Eastern Literature* [ed. Scott B. Noegel. Bethesda, MD: CDL Press, 2000], 208).

Table 6.1 Synopsis of Isa 43:10c-13, Deut 32:39b, and Isa 45:5-7

Isa 43:10c-13	Deut 32:39	Isaiah 45:5-7			
כִּי־אָנִי הוּא לִפְנֵי לֹא־נָצַר אֶל וְאַחֲרִי לֹא יִהְיֶה אָנֹכִי אָנֹכִי יְהוָה וְאַنֵּ מִבְּלָעְדִּי מוֹשִׁיעַ אָנֹכִי הַגְּדָתִי וְהַשְׁעָתִי וְהַשְׁמָעִתִּי וְאַנֵּ בְּכֶם זֶה ... וְאַנֵּ־אֵל גַּם־מִימּוֹם אָנִי הוּא וְאַנֵּ מִידִי מְצִיל אָפָעַל וּמַיְּשִׁיבָנָה	For I am he Before me no god was formed and after me there will be none I, I am YHWH There is no savior apart from me I declare And I save And I make it heard. And there is no foreign [god] among you ... I am God Even from today I am he And there is none who delivers from my hand I act and who can reply	רָאוּ עֲתָה כִּי אָנִי אָנִי הָוּא עַמְּדִי וְאַנֵּ אֱלֹהִים אָנִי אָמִית וְאַחֲיה מְחַצֵּתִי וְאָנִי אַרְפָּא וְאַנֵּ מִידִי מְצִיל	See now, For I, I am he and there is no god with me I take and give life I wound and I heal and there is none who delivers from my hand	אָנִי יְהוָה וְאַنֵּ עוד וְאַנֵּ עוד זָלְתִּי אַנֵּ אלֹהִים... כִּי־אָפָס בְּלָעְדִּי אָנִי יְהוָה וְאַנֵּ עוד	I am YHWH and there is no other There is none apart from me. There is no God For there is none apart from me. I am YHWH There is no other. The one forming light and creating darkness The one making wholeness and creating calamity I am YHWH who does all of these things

These passages share several ideas: YHWH's self-disclosure, exclusivity, indomitability, and absolute sovereignty—even killing (אמיתת) and causing calamity (בורא רע).

Isaiah incorporates Moses' language that describes the idols and those who worship them as אפס-like. Several terms describe the idols/idolaters in Deut 32:33 (e.g., שדים/תועבת/זרים), yet the one most germane to our analysis is לֹא אֱלֹהָה. In Deut 32:17 and 32:21, Moses calls the false gods “no-god” (לֹא-אֱלֹהָה). As our previous study has shown, Isaiah utilizes אפס to describe the nothing-like gods, even using the phrase אפס אלֹהִים (Isa 45:14). Hezekiah's prayer also contains comparable language that describes the gods of the vanquished nations (לֹא אֱלֹהִים הַמָּה, Isa 37:19; cf. Jer 2:19, 5:7, 16:20; 2 Chr 13:9). Additionally, Moses warns that those who spurn YHWH and serve “no-gods” will be spurned by “no-people.” Consider Deut 32:21:

הַנְּקָנוֹתִים בְּלֹא־אֱלֹהִים	They make me <b>jealous</b> with <i>no-gods</i>
כָּעֵסָנוּ בְּהַלְּיָהִם	They <b>vex</b> me with <i>worthless [idols]</i> <sup>158</sup>
אַקְנִיאָם בְּלֹא־עָם	I will make them <b>jealous</b> with <i>no-people</i>
בְּגַויִּים נְבָלָם אַכְעִיסָם	With a <i>foolish nation</i> I will <b>vex</b> them

The parallelism makes several things clear in this verse: “no-gods” and “no-people” are appellations since both sets of designations are marked by the preposition ב. Secondly, Moses' designation of the potential conquerors as “no people” is not simply a slur but a clear example of *lex talionis*.<sup>159</sup> Most important for our purposes, Moses designates *idolatrous* people as “no-people.”<sup>160</sup> In effect, YHWH says, “If you anger me with idols, I will anger you with idolaters!” The phrasing found in Deut 32-33 is almost exactly the same kind of language and theology Isaiah communicates.

<sup>158</sup> הַכָּעֵסָנוּ בְּלֹא is clearly a designation for idols as the rest of the Hebrew Bible makes clear (cf. Jer 8:19c, בְּלֹא נָכֵר; cf. e.g., 1 Kgs 16:13, 26; Isa 57:13).

<sup>159</sup> So also Beale, *We Become What We Worship*, 47.

<sup>160</sup> There are several reasons why גַּוי נְבָל designates an idolatrous nation, as opposed to simply a foolish nation. First, Moses initially calls the disobedient, idolatrous Israel a foolish nation (עַם נְבָל, Deut 32:6; cf. 32:5!). Secondly, Isaiah *also* uses נְבָל to describe those who are blind and deaf in idolatry (Isa 32:3-4)—who furthermore, commit iniquity (אָוֹן).

Moses also warns that if it were not for the taunt of other nations, YHWH would also make Israel אפס for her idolatry. Deuteronomy 32:26 begins, “I said, ‘אַפְאֵיכֶם אֲשֶׁר תִּשְׁבַּתְהָ’ (אשְׁבִּיתָה) their memory from humankind.” There is little consensus on this anomalous form in Deut 32:26,<sup>161</sup> some,<sup>162</sup> however, have offered a conjectural emendation of אפס הֵם אֲשֶׁר תִּשְׁבַּתְהָ.<sup>163</sup> Therefore, the original would read: אָמַרְתִּי אֲפָס הֵם אֲשֶׁר תִּשְׁבַּתְהָ (I would say, “They are nothing,” I shall cease their memory from humankind). This reading would not only provide another example of אפס as being attributed to a person, but in light of the abundance of echoes of Deut 32-33, Isaiah could also be picking up this idea and using it to describe the idolaters of his day.

<sup>161</sup> Several understand this form to derive from the root פאה and consider it a cognate with the Arabic root فَأْي (cut or cleave). The SP has an equally challenging אָפִי הֵם. The LXX (διασπερω) could come from the root פוץ (Carmel McCarthy, “Commentary on the Critical Apparatus,” *Deuteronomy* [BHQ; vol. 5; Stuttgart, Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2007], \*147). The TO is similar to אָפִי לְכָלֹת (Ezek 20:8) or some connection of אָפִי and בְּלָה אֲשִׁיצִי. בְּלָה also seems related to בְּלָה (e.g., Deut 7:22) or שְׁמַד (e.g., Deut 28:45). The Syr. as well as the Vg. understands this to be an interrogative הֵם (אִיְפּוּ הֵם). The modern translations are divided, though many side with the root פאה (ESV “cut,” NLT “annihilate,” Schlachter 2000 “Ich will sie wegblasen”), some with פוץ (NIV and CEV “scatter,” RVA “Echaríalos”), and still others with אִיְפּוּ הֵם (Luther Bibel, “Wo sind sie?” Vg., “ubinam sunt”).

<sup>162</sup> HALOT, DCH 6:644, and apparently NJPS. Patrick W. Skehan also translates the phrase “I would have said, I will make an end of them...” although he does not indicate his reconstructed original (“The Structure of the Song of Moses in Deuteronomy (Deut 32:1-43)” *CBQ* 13 [1951]:153-63).

<sup>163</sup> If the original root were אפס, there are a few possibilities for the origin of present form. One could argue that the LXX translator misunderstood אָפְצִיחָם for אָפְסִיחָם, confusing the ס and צ. Alternatively, the ס was lost through parablepsis, subsequently the צ was added to form a verb. The צ could have arisen from the difficult root to conform it to a common word for exile. Once the form appeared as a verb, a yod may have been added to make הֵם a suffix.

The internal evidence may also point in this direction. Consider Ps 9:7 [Eng. 9:6],

הָאוֹב תָּמו	The enemy is <b>no more</b> ,
חרבות לְנִצָּח	eternal ruins;
וְעָרִים נִתְשָׁת	and [their] cities you remove,
< אָבֵד זְכָרָם >	<b>their memory perishes</b> (הַמָּה has been deleted following Syr.).

This may be the closest parallel to Deut 32:26 since nowhere does one find the co-occurrence of זְכָרָם אֲשֶׁר תִּשְׁבַּתְהָ. We have already seen the verb חַמֵּם used in a similar manner as אֲפָס (Gen 47:15-16).

By way of summary, we have seen that Isaiah takes the theology and wording of Deuteronomy and uses them in his prophecy. The prophet reminds his hearers that YHWH alone is God; namely, there is no other rock to which they can flee, for nothing compares to YHWH. All other gods are nothing, and those who worship them become similarly inconsequential. Isaiah's use of Deut 32:33 demonstrates that he, likewise, considers those who worship no-gods to be nothing (אַפָּסִים). Therefore, Isaiah's reference to the **אַפָּסִים אֶרֶץ** in Isa 45:22 refers to the do-nothing idol worshippers who must turn to YHWH.

### **6.5 Geographic Reference “*Ends of the Earth*”**

No one doubts that YHWH's call in Isa 45:22 extends the *geographic* “ends” of the earth, which is a synecdoche for all humanity. Previously, we discerned a few interpretations of the exact identity of those addressed, as well as the nature of **עַשֵּׂה**. Scholars have seen the geographic “ends of the earth” as scattered Israel, all non-Israelites, or both. Interpreters have also understood the verb **עַשֵּׂה** as indicating either the recognition of legal vindication or deliverance from destruction. After reviewing the passage once more, we will conclude that the synecdoche includes both the nations and idolatrous Israel who are offered salvation from legal shame and actual destruction.

Isaiah first addresses the **פָּלִיטִי הָנוּם** as **אַפָּסִים אֶרֶץ**, those who survived the onslaught of Cyrus' conquest who consist of both Israelites and non-Israelites. In both the trial speech of Isa 45:20-21 and the salvation oracle in 45:22-25, YHWH addresses the same individuals with these two phrases (**אַפָּסִים אֶרֶץ** and **פָּלִיטִי הָנוּם**). Although Isaiah calls the remnant of Israel **פָּלִיטִים** elsewhere (66:19), the term probably refers to the nations in

45:20 for two reasons. First, Isa 45:20 begins with a command to assemble (הַקְבִּיצוּ) for a dispute. Several times within the context of other trial speeches, YHWH commands *the nations* to gather (קָבֵץ) for a legal dispute (43:9, 44:11, 48:14). Furthermore, these individuals in 45:20 are described as stupid idolaters (לֹא יִדְעּוּ הַנְּשָׁאִים אֶת-עַזְּפָלָם). This does not necessarily rule out Israel as the one who is addressed for inasmuch as Israel acts like one of the nations by worshipping other gods, the covenant community is comparably foolish and shares the same fate. Therefore, we may conclude that the synecdoche (אֲפָסִי אֶרְצָן) speaks of all those who do not worship YHWH—regardless of the genetic heritage.

Isaiah argues that the only hope for condemned idolaters is found in turning to YHWH for deliverance from judgment and destruction. The prophet's own name declares that salvation is found in YHWH. Isaiah uses **עִשְׂוָה** to describe not only vindication, but also amnesty offered by the judge of the universe. Although some claim that **עִשְׂוָה** in Isa 45:22 merely depicts the acknowledgment of YHWH's victory in the dispute, it remains to be seen why Isaiah uses the phrase **פָנוּ אֲלֵי** in this context.<sup>164</sup> The language of *turning toward* usually has positive connotations (e.g., 2 Chr 4:4);<sup>165</sup> furthermore, as we will see momentarily, the expression may describe a change in religious affiliation. One would also expect a *Hiphil* of **צַדֵּק** to describe a declaration of legal victory, not the *Niphal* of **עִשְׂוָה** as the text reads. Therefore, **עִשְׂוָה** signifies more than simple acknowledgment of victory.

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<sup>164</sup> Moreover, one ought not bifurcate **אָל** and YHWH. Isaiah uses the singular **אָל** to describe **אֱלֹהִי יִשְׂרָאֵל** (45:15). Motyer also notes that the **אָל** of 22 is contrasted with the helpless **אָל** of 20d (*The Prophecy of Isaiah*, 66).

<sup>165</sup> A notable exception is Job 21:5, **פָנוּ אֲלֵי** וְהַשְׁמִוּ יְדֵיכֶם-פָה

Instead of describing a mere confession, Isaiah uses the expression פנה אל and the verb ישע to call the religious conversion. One finds the phrase פנה אל אפסי ארץ in Moses' admonitions against *turning* from YHWH to other gods (פנה...מעם יהוה אלהינו) (פנה אל-הנום, Deut 29:17). This phrase may be used to describe both religious unfaithfulness to YHWH (פנה מ...) and turning to other gods or idols (פנה אל-אללים, Deut 31:18; cf. Deut 30:17, 31:20; Lev 19:4, 31; cf. Lev 20:6). The opposite of the phrase is to turn the back and not the face (ויפנו אליו ערכ ולא פנים) (Jer 32:33; Jer 2:27).<sup>166</sup> Similarly, Isaiah describes the sins of the people as turning to one's own way (לדרך פנינו), Isa 53:6, cf. 56:11). In light of these warnings, we may discern that the positive call in Isa 45:22 beckons the to אפסי ארץ to affiliate with YHWH.

One last parallel in Deuteronomy, the phrase פנה אל, and the *Niphal* stem of the verb **עָשָׂי** may show that Isa 45:22 is one of the clearest calls for conversion, i.e., submission to YHWH as Suzerain. In Deut 33:29, Moses describes Israel as a people *saved by YHWH* (עם נושא ביהוה); furthermore, the very next phrase calls YHWH their *protecting Suzerain* (מן עוזך, Deut 32:29). Additionally, other passages relate receiving salvation (**עָשָׂי** in the *Niphal*) with covenant obedience (Num 10:9, Jer 17:14, 33:16; cf. Isa 30:15). Just five verses prior to the passage under analysis (Isa 45:22), Isaiah also calls Israel “A people saved by YHWH” (עם נושא ביהוה, Isa 45:17), who are given eternal salvation (תשועת עולם). Therefore, the colocation of **עָשָׂי** in the *Niphal* as well as the phrase פנה אל in Isa 45:22 is striking. YHWH calls all idolaters to turn from idolatry to

<sup>166</sup> Koole understands the combination of פנה and אל to describe a superior turning to an inferior. Thus, here the “Saviour God puts himself at the disposal of the world” (*Isaiah III*, 2:486). Yet this remains to be seen.

him, resulting in the submission to his hegemony in order to receive salvation.<sup>167</sup> Isaiah 45:22 may be one of the clearest calls to conversion in the Hebrew Bible. Evidence indicates that it is one of the most universal calls as well.

#### 6.5.1 Universal Offer of Salvation in Isaiah

Within Isaiah, references to YHWH's universal reign abound, especially as a consequence of his vindication in his dispute with the idols.<sup>168</sup> The nations behold that YHWH alone is God through the testimony of his people, to the disgrace of those who make idols (45:15-16).

Every nation shall ultimately recognize YHWH's supremacy—all will bow to YHWH (45:23-25), willingly or reluctantly (25:3). Early in the prophecy, Isaiah declares that Egypt shall be judged for their idols and magicians, but afterwards the ancient nation shall be taught the way of YHWH (וְנוֹדַע יְהוָה לְמִצְרַיִם, 19:19-24). We have also seen that Israel is to be a light *to the nations*—giving sight to the blind (42:6-7; 45:18-19; 49:6). Israel's God will remove the blinders from all peoples and nations (25:7) in order that those previously sightless (i.e., idol worshippers) will receive vision and follow YHWH (42:16-17). When the Davidic king is in place, the nations shall seek his counsel and honor (11:10). Eventually, the nations and ends of the earth (אַפְסֵי אָרֶץ) shall see the salvation and vindication of YHWH, proclaiming “your God reigns” (מֶלֶךְ אֱלֹהִיךְ, 52:7-10).<sup>169</sup> As the boundaries of the land expand, so YHWH's glory is further magnified

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<sup>167</sup> Watts misses the point entirely when he understands Cyrus to be the one offering restoration of material benefits—for *in YHWH* is victory found (*Isaiah 34-66*, 707).

<sup>168</sup> Isa 2:2-4; 14:1-2; 18:7; 24:14-16; 41:20; 42:11-12, 16; 44:5; 45:14, 51:5 (cf 42:4!); 62:2.

<sup>169</sup> Isaiah 52:10b reads וְרָאוּ כָל-אַפְסֵי-אָרֶץ אֶת יִשְׁוּעָת אֱלֹהֵינוּ (And all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God). One may understand אֶת יִשְׁוּעָת אֱאָה...אֶת יִשְׁוּעָת אֱאָה as an expression that describes one who experiences salvation (cf. Exod 14:13; so also Koole, *Isaiah III*, 2: 486). Similarly, the idea of showing

(26:15).<sup>170</sup> YHWH’s victory over the idols demonstrates that he is the true God, who alone can provide hope and help.

Thus, the geographic reference to אַפְּסִי אֶרְצָן shows that YHWH calls all nations (i.e., idolaters) to submit to his reign and receive salvation.<sup>171</sup> Moreover, Isaiah heightens the irony by using אַפְּסִי as a pejorative name for the idol-like nothings. YHWH has proven the relative worthlessness of idolaters and beckons them to receive vindication and deliverance.

## 6.6 Summary

This thesis has argued that Isaiah consistently uses the term אַפְּסִי to describe the exclusivity of YHWH and comparative nothingness of idols and idolaters; furthermore, since these two thoughts abound in the immediate context of Isa 45:22, the prophet uses this term to describe the “nothings” of the earth as well as the geographic “ends.”<sup>172</sup> In

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salvation (*hiphil* of רָאָה and יִשְׁועָה) also implies causing one to experience salvation (Ps 91:16; 2 Chr 20:17). However, Ps 98:1-2 explicitly speaks against this—nations *see* deliverance, but do not enjoy it. Moreover, the previous verse in the passage (Isa 52:9) speaks of YHWH comforting his people and Jerusalem (עַמּוֹ...יְרוּשָׁלָם), which is subsequently contrasted with the nations and הארץ אַפְּסִי who behold the salvation. If this passage spoke of the salvation of the הארץ, one might also expect a third person pronoun with אלהים instead of the first person that is found. In other words, Isaiah says that the ends of the earth will *see* our God’s salvation. Therefore, Isa 52:10 describes the nations’ perception—not the experience—of Israel’s salvation.

As Labuschagne says, “[I]t is important to note the close connection between the idea of Yahweh’s incomparability and the idea that not only Israel, but also the heathen had to acknowledge Yahweh as God” (*The Incomparability*, 146).

<sup>170</sup> Lest one over-interpret these universalistic promises, this promise is followed by a warning against those who continue to trust in false gods (42:17). Not all will bend the knee willingly.

<sup>171</sup> Early Christians will pick up this message as they seek to proclaim the Gospel to the “ends of the earth” (ἔως ἐσχάτου τῆς γῆς, Acts 1:8; cf. Isa 45:22 LXX, οἱ ἀπὸ ἐσχάτου τῆς γῆς).

<sup>172</sup> One should not be surprised at the presence of paronomasia in Isaiah. The prophet uses numerous types of word play including another example of antanaclasis, i.e., the juxtaposition of a two homophones or homographs (Isa 50:16, 18; תְּשַׁׁ “breast” vs. “oppression”; cf. נַפְשָׁנִי in Jonah 2:8).

There have been several studies on the existence and use of word play in the Hebrew Bible and Isaiah (cf. the numerous articles and edited volumes in the bibliography below). We have also previously

this passage, the Creator calls the idolaters “nothing” once more and beckons them to turn to him—instead of the idols—for genuine help and hope. Indeed, the pericope continues by describing YHWH’s irrevocable legal decision, צדקה דבר ולא ישוב (45:23): all will bend the knee and confess, “Only *in YHWH* is it said of me, ‘[He has] righteousness and strength’” (אך ביהוה לי אמר צדקות ועוז<sup>173</sup>). In other words, all will confess that the *only* (仅有) source of help and hope is YHWH. Everyone acknowledges that YHWH *alone* brings vindication, yet only those who turn will experience salvation. For this reason, YHWH’s adversaries (נחרים, cf. 41:11) shall be ashamed (יבשו, 45:24), i.e., proven guilty and condemned.<sup>174</sup> Yet all of “Israel” shall be declared righteous and glorified (45:25).

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noted how Isaiah, not unlike other prophets, uses terms as “nicknames,” in which one may expect to find *double entendres* or word play.

Several authors have sought to find significance or reasons for the inclusion of paronomasia in a work. Schorch describes three type of functions for puns: emphatic—“underlining” the text, exegetic—it “creates new semantic level,” and symbolic—it is “the symbol of a non-linguistic phenomenon” (“Between Science and Magic,” 207-220). If אפס is an “exegetic” pun, it would create “a second literary level, a new text, which competes with the main text” (*ibid.*, 211). Other scholars describe wordplay in less specific terms. Some claim that it functions as a device used to surprise the reader or as Greenstein says, an instance of word play “if sufficiently striking, reacts an exegetical trajectory” (Greenstein, “Wordplay,” 970). This is exactly what happens in Isa 45:22—Isaiah strikes his hearers with a different use of אפס—not only is this another occurrence of the context specific “nothings,” but also the specific phrase “ends of the earth” as well.

While one must be cautious to avoid over-interpret and find wordplay where it does not exist, surely we have not uncovered every possible example of paronomasia in the Bible. Payne rightly warns, “It is imperative...that one is not led astray by the fact that two different English words might have to be employed to render a single Hebrew word in different contexts” (Payne, “Characteristic Word-Play in ‘Second Isaiah’: A Reappraisal” *JSS* 12 [1967]: 217). Based on our previous analysis of the term אפס, two different Hebrew nuances are intended. Moreover, Roberts’ comment is particularly helpful for reading the wordsmith Isaiah, “While one must remain aware of the danger of over-reading, however, it is far more likely that our lack of familiarity with the wider connotations of classical Hebrew words and phrases will result in underreading, of missing intentional double entendres” (“Double entendre in First Isaiah.” *CBQ* 54 [1992]: 40).

<sup>173</sup> So also 1QIsa<sup>a</sup>.

<sup>174</sup> As Baltzer notes, כל is repeated four times in 22-24 (*Deutero-Isaiah*, 250). This would also draw these referents together.

Within this passage, we see that those who turn to YHWH receive the only available vindication and salvation—that of the exclusive Creator of all.

By way of summary, this chapter has argued that Isaiah uses סְפָאָה in Isa 45:22 as a slur for idols and Israelite or non-Israelite idolaters as well as a synecdoche for all humanity. Isaiah develops his theology from the Torah and carries over much of the message of Deut 32-33 in particular. Gleaning from Deut 32-33, the prophet demonstrates YHWH’s exclusivity and the idolaters’ inconsequentiality. Isaiah may also echo Moses’ designation of those who worship false gods as סְפָאָה. In this way, Isaiah turns the phrase סְפָאָה in 45:22 to call to salvation the spiritual “nothings” and geographical “ends” of the earth.

## 7. CONCLUSION:

This thesis has investigated Isaiah's use of the word אַפָּס in Isa 45:22 and demonstrated that the phrase אַפָּס אֶרֶץ is a double entendre meaning "nothings" and "ends of the earth." After a brief inquiry into several preliminary issues, we analyzed the root אַפָּס within its Semitic cognates as well as its usage in the Hebrew Bible. The word אַפָּס predominately describes *cessation* or *lack of existence*. We have considered Isaiah's penchant for the term to describe idols and idolaters, especially in Isa 40-55. For this reason, Isaiah's use of אַפָּס in Isa 45:22 ought to strike one as another example of Isaianic paronomasia.

Then we considered how Isa 45:22 fits within the form and structure of the book. We have noted the prophecy's general move from weal (Isa 1-39) to woe (40-66). We considered how the prophet contrasts two main literary forms (polemics and oracles of salvation) to demonstrate how idols are nothing (אַפָּס) and how YHWH alone is God. Isaiah structured the juxtaposition of these two literary forms, through Isa 44:24-46:13 in part, to highlight the contrast of YHWH with the idols and their worshipers, identifying the latter as אַפָּס.

Next, we analyzed Isaiah's major theme of the incomparability of YHWH. The prophet describes how the idols are neither transcendent, since they are created, nor existentially immanent, since they do nothing. YHWH, on the other hand, is completely unique and the sole Creator who helps, purposes, honors, and offers hope. Unlike the idols, YHWH intervenes in history and is worthy of trust. The prophet jeers at other gods, for they are nothing (אַפָּס) and since people resemble what they worship, those who

worship the idols are similarly אַפָּס. Thus, Isaiah ridicules the folly of trusting in anything else but the exclusive Creator of the universe.

Finally, this thesis interpreted Isa 45:22 in light of our previous investigation. We considered the occasions where Isaiah calls the idols and their worshippers אַפָּס and concluded that the prophet uses this term to taunt the idolaters. By comparing Isaiah and Deut 32-33, we noted the abundance of striking, parallel themes, including the exclusivity of YHWH as well as the comparative nothingness of every other god or nation. Additionally, Moses also appears to call those who worship false gods אַפָּס. We concluded that the אַפָּס in Isa 45:22 likewise refers to the nothings-like idolaters. Nevertheless, Isaiah also uses the standardized phrase אַפָּסִי אֶרֶץ to designate the “ends of the earth,” and while there is some disagreement about the exact understanding of this expression, this thesis has argued that אַפָּסִי אֶרֶץ is a synecdoche for all humanity. We concluded that YHWH’s call for repentance in Isa 45:22, which is directed toward the אַפָּסִי אֶרֶץ, addresses *both the “ends” and the “nothings” of the earth*. Therefore, Isa 45:22 stands as one of the most evangelistic passages of the Hebrew Bible—all are beckoned to find salvation in YHWH.

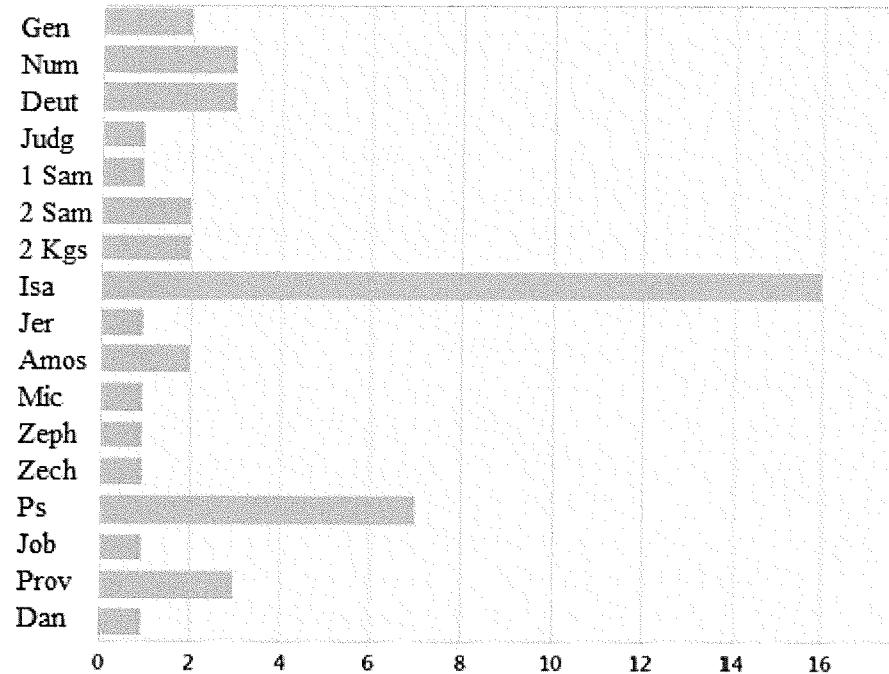
Isaiah proclaims his message clearly: YHWH alone is the Lord of the universe—compared to him, all else is nothing. The only source of help and hope for every idol-like “nothing” is the transcendent *and* immanent Creator. To him every person should turn for salvation; for he alone is God, and there is no other.

APPENDIX A: NUANCES OF אֵפֶס:

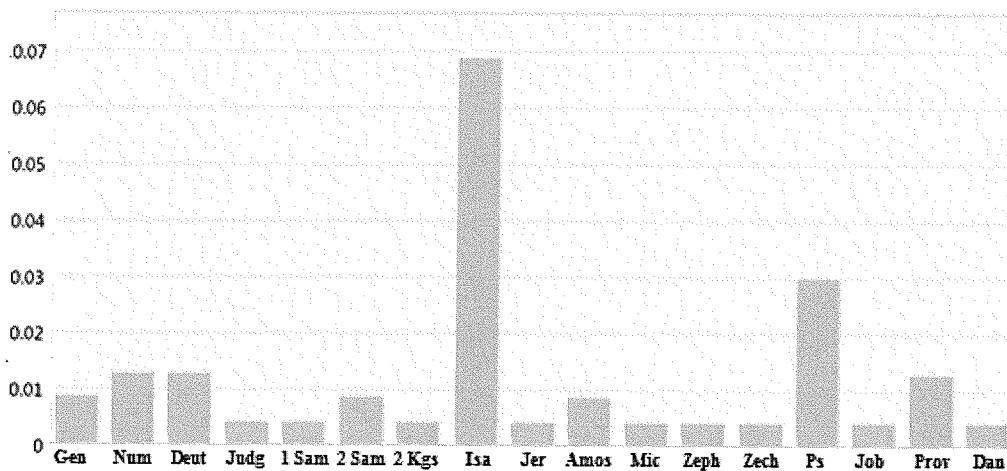
	וּבָן (verb- to be no more)	אֵפֶס ≈ אֵין Nonexistence	אֵפֶס (כִּי) Limitative	אֵפֶס עַד Singularity	אֵפֶס אֶרְץ “Ends of the earth”	Total
<b>Isaiah</b>	2	10	0	2	2	<b>16</b>
<b>Remaining HB</b>	3	8	7	2	12 <sup>A</sup>	<b>32</b>
<b>Total</b>	5	19	7	3	14	<b>48</b>

<sup>A</sup> Six of the 12 are in the book of Psalms.

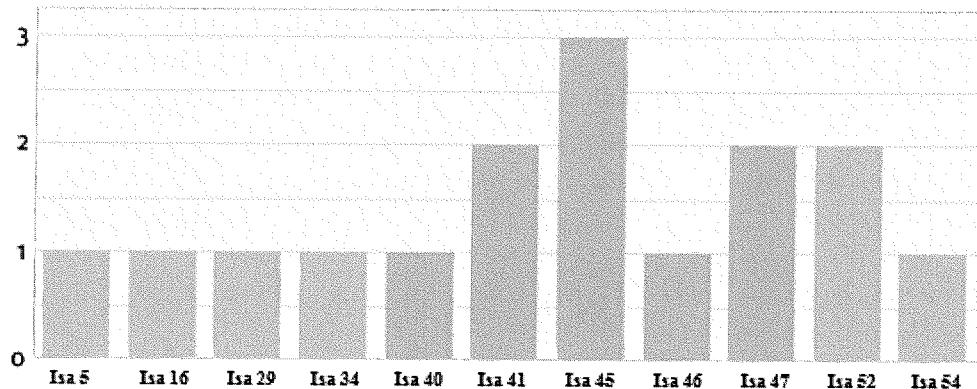
APPENDIX B: DISTRIBUTION OF THE ROOT ספָּא IN THE HEBREW BIBLE #1:



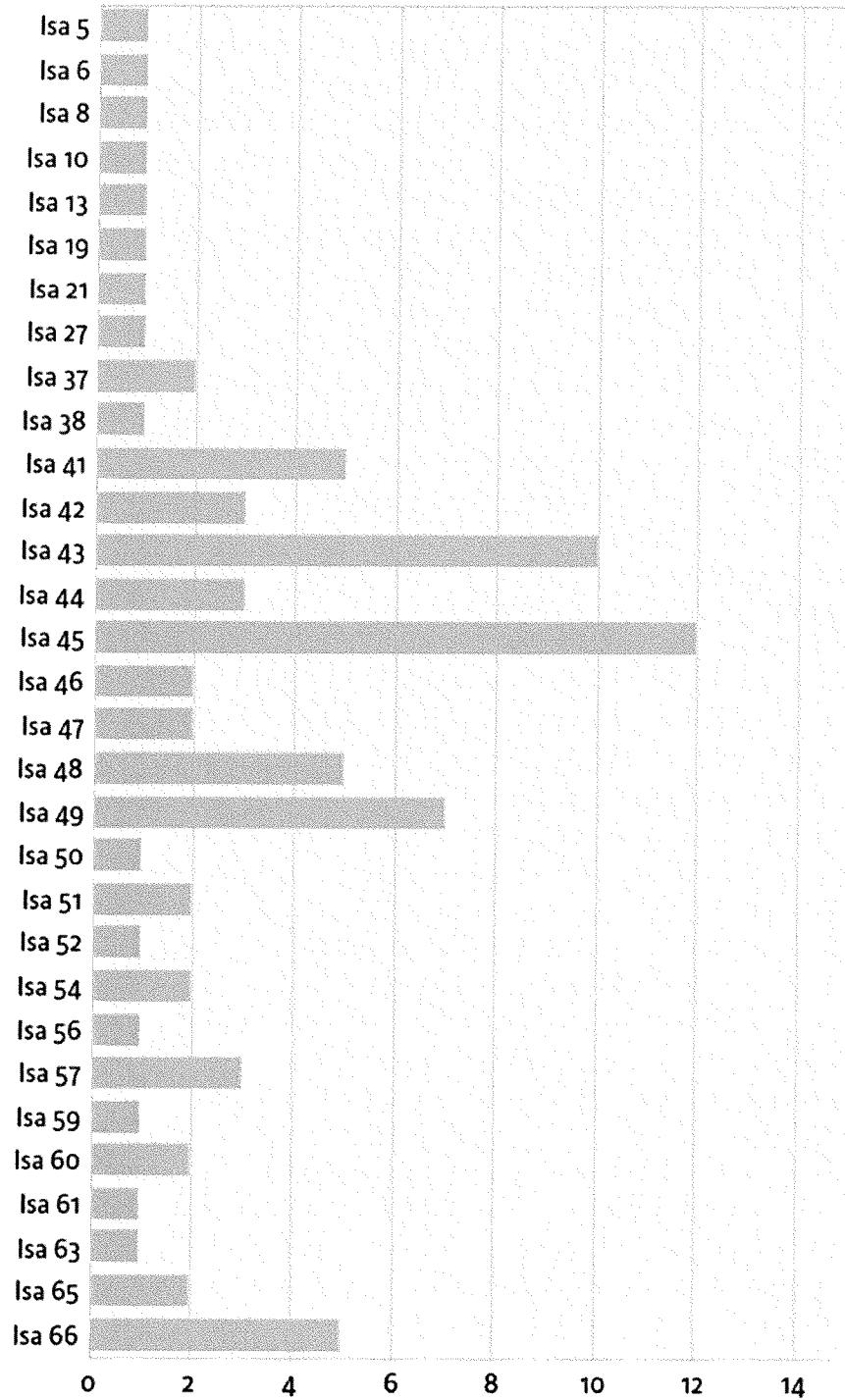
APPENDIX C: DISTRIBUTION OF THE ROOT נָפָךְ IN THE HEBREW BIBLE #2  
NUMBER OF OCCURRENCES PER NUMBER OF VERSES



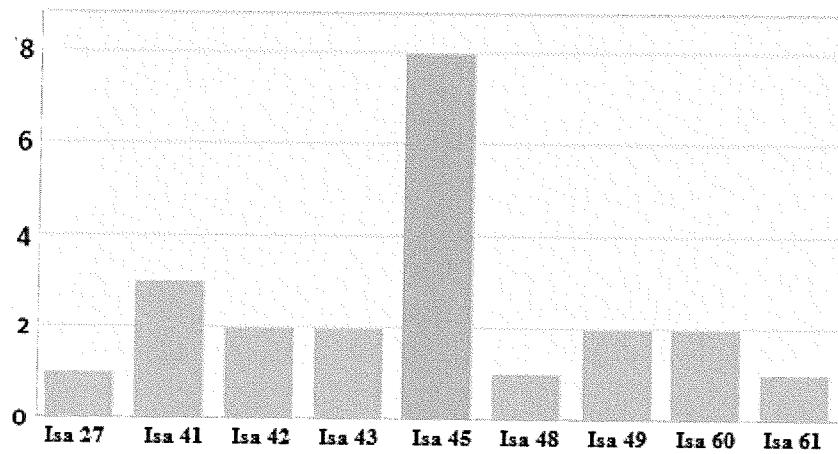
#### APPENDIX D: DISTRIBUTION OF סְפָנָה IN ISAIAH



## APPENDIX E: DISTRIBUTION OF PRONOUN אָנֹכִי/אָנָי IN ISAIAH



## APPENDIX F: DISTRIBUTION OF אָנָי יְהוָה IN ISAIAH



APPENDIX G: מִרְאָה הַצָּדָקָה IN TRANSLATION

	Isa 5:26	(26:15) <sup>B</sup>	Isa 40:28	41:5	41:9	42:10	43:6	48:20	49:6	62:11
MT	מִרְאָה הַצָּדָקָה	מִרְאָה הַצָּדָקָה	צָדָקָה	צָדָקָה	צָדָקָה	צָדָקָה	צָדָקָה	צָדָקָה	צָדָקָה	צָדָקָה
LXX	ἄκρους τῆς γῆς	τοῖς ἐνδόξοις τῆς γῆς	τὰς ἄκρας τῆς γῆς	τὰς ἄκρας τῆς γῆς	ἄκρων τῆς γῆς	ἄκρους τῆς γῆς	ἄκρων τῆς γῆς	ἐπιχάρων τῆς γῆς	ἐπιχάρους τῆς γῆς	ἐπιχάρους τῆς γῆς
TJ	אָרָעָא סִפְיָא	סִפְיָא לְבָנָם	יְסוֹדָה אָרָעָא	דְּבָשִׁי	תְּעוּדוֹ אָרָעָא	סִפְיָא אָרָעָא	סִפְיָא אָרָעָא	סִפְיָא אָרָעָא	סִפְיָא אָרָעָא	סִפְיָא אָרָעָא
Peshitta	מִרְאָה מִרְאָה	מִרְאָה מִרְאָה	מִרְאָה	מִרְאָה	מִרְאָה	מִרְאָה	מִרְאָה	מִרְאָה	מִרְאָה	מִרְאָה

B מִרְאָה הַצָּדָקָה  
C צָדָקָה is only used as a translation of צָדָקָה in Isaiah.

APPENDIX H: **חֶרֶב** IN TRANSLATION

	Deut 33:17	1 Sam 2:10	Isa 45:22	Isa 52:10	Jer 16:9	Mic 5:3	Zech 9:10	Ps 2:8	Ps 22:28	Ps 59:14	Ps 67:8	Ps 72:8	Ps 98:3	Prov 30:4
MT	אַפְסִי־ חֶרֶב	אַפְסִי־ חֶרֶב												
LXX	ἄκρους γῆς	ἄκρα γῆς	ἐποχάτου τῆς γῆς	ἐποχάτου τῆς γῆς	ἄκρων τῆς γῆς	ἐποχάτου τῆς γῆς	ἄκρων τῆς γῆς	πέρατα τῆς γῆς	πέρατα τῆς γῆς	πέρατα τῆς γῆς	πέρατα τῆς γῆς	πέρατα τῆς γῆς	πέρατα τῆς γῆς	πέρατα τῆς γῆς
TJ (TO)	סִפְיָא אֲרָעָא	סִפְיָא אֲרָעָא												
Syr.	תְּמִימָה וְאַזְמָה													

APPENDIX I: SYNOPSIS OF JESHURUN PASSAGES IN DEUTERONOMY AND ISAIAH

Isa 44:2, 6, 8	Deut 32:15-17	Deut 33:5	Deut 33:26
בָּרוּךְ רֹאשׁ כָּרָא מֶרֶב	Thus says YHWH	וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה יְהוָה יְבָעַט	וְאַז כִּי לֹא יְשֻׁרָּעַן רַכְבָּם
עַצְרָךְ מִצְרָא שָׁׁעַרְךָ יְמִינָךְ	Your maker, and your former from the womb I help you.	שְׁמֹגֵן עֲבָתָה בְּשִׁירָה עֲשָׂרָה אֲשָׁלָה עֲשָׂרָה יְשֻׁעָה עֲבָלָה יְשֻׁעָה	וְאַז כִּי לֹא יְשֻׁרָּעַן רַכְבָּם שְׁמִינִים עַצְרָא בְּאֹחוֹת שְׁמִינִים:

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## VITA

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